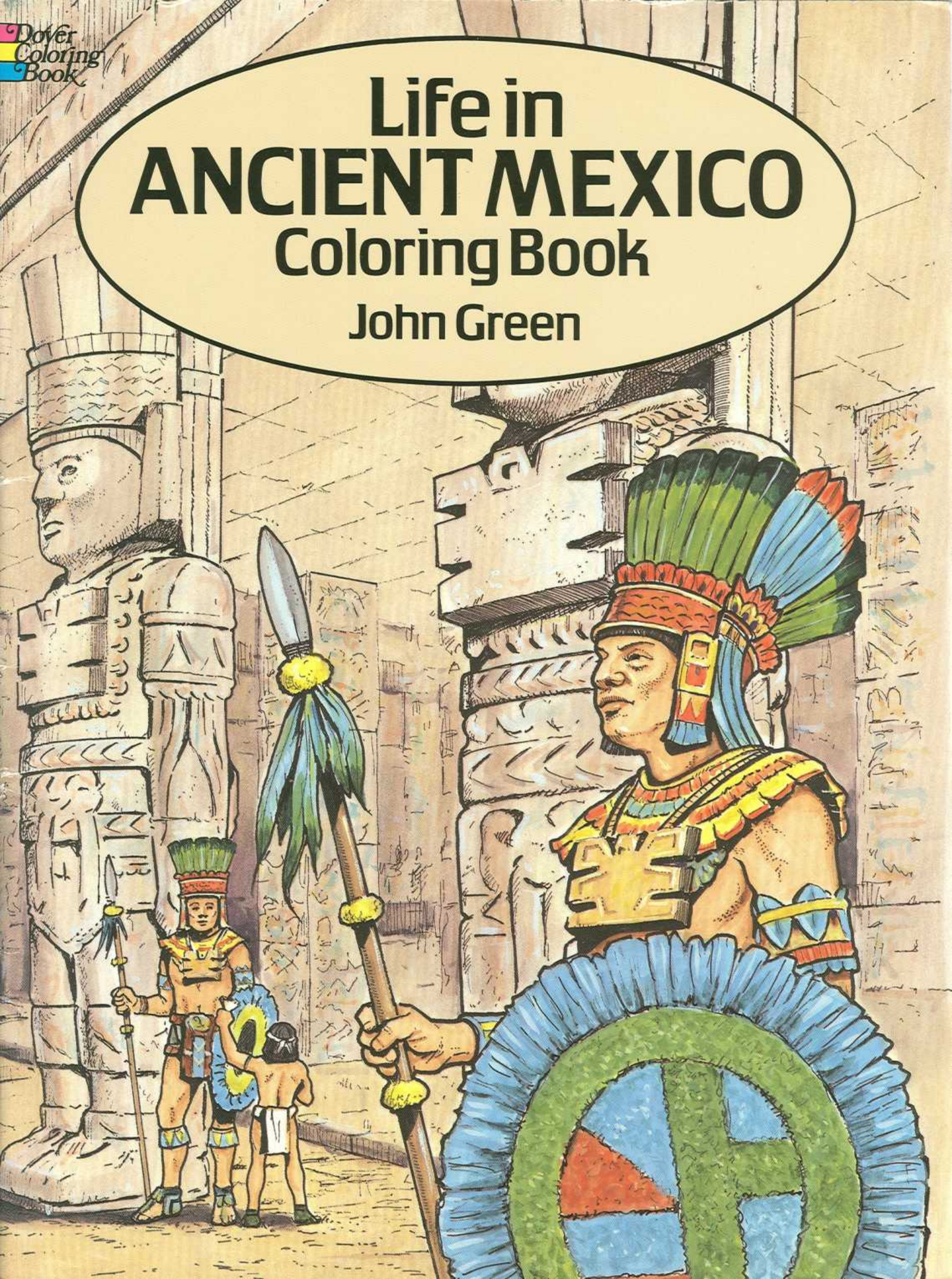
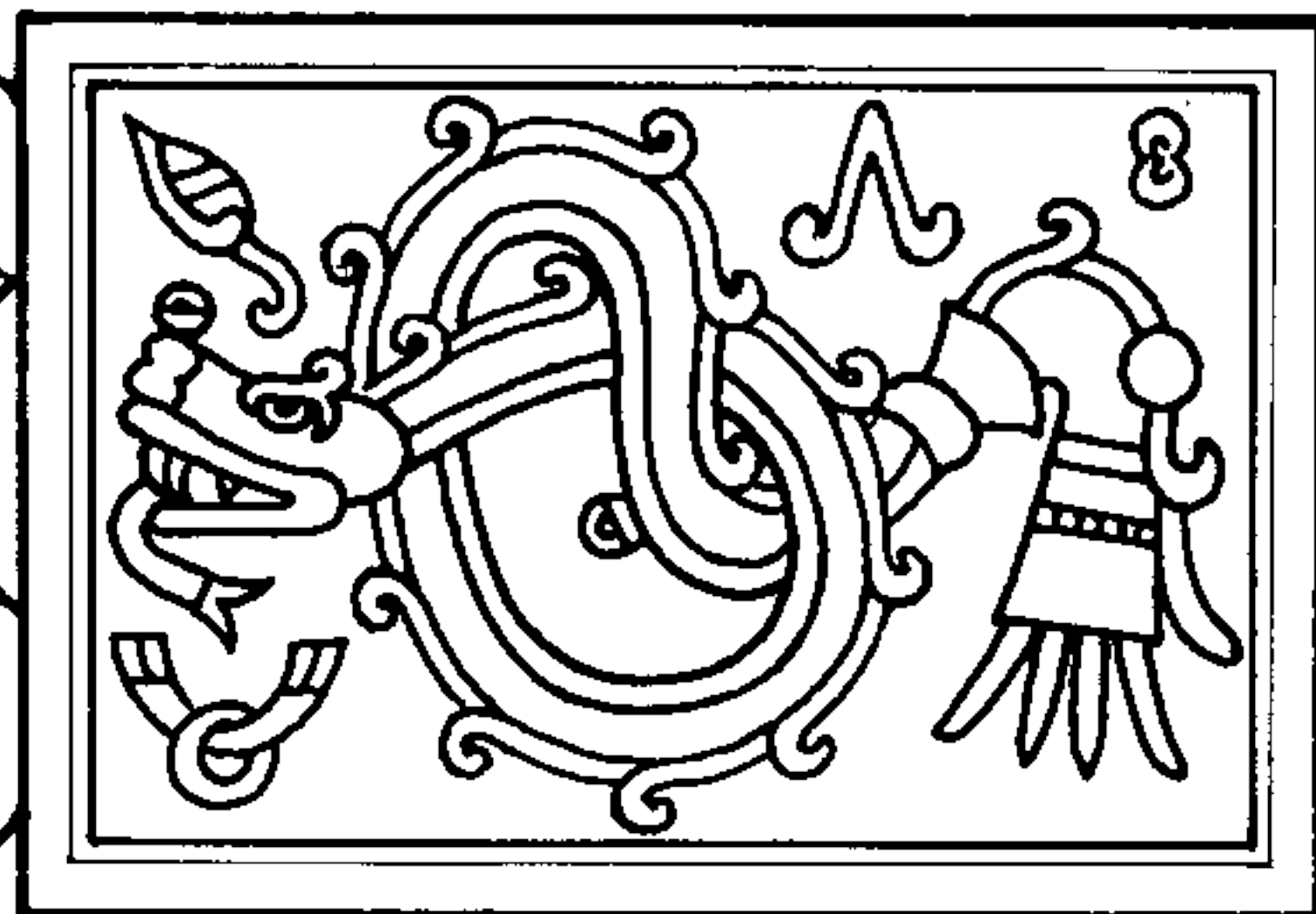


Life in ANCIENT MEXICO Coloring Book

John Green



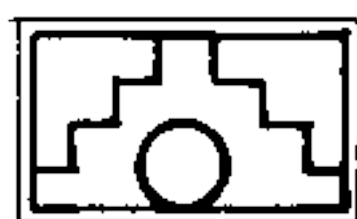


LIFE IN ANCIENT MEXICO

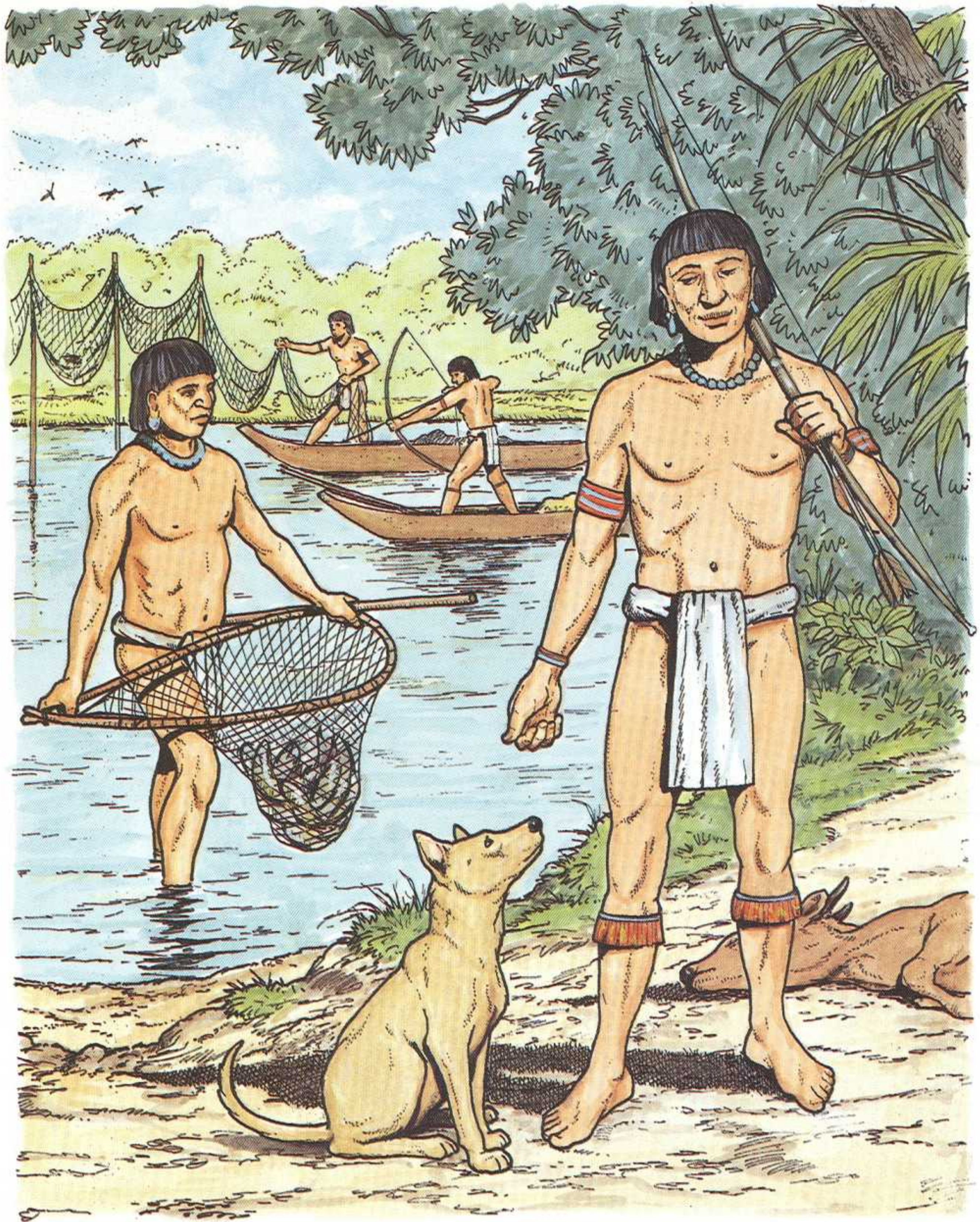
Coloring Book

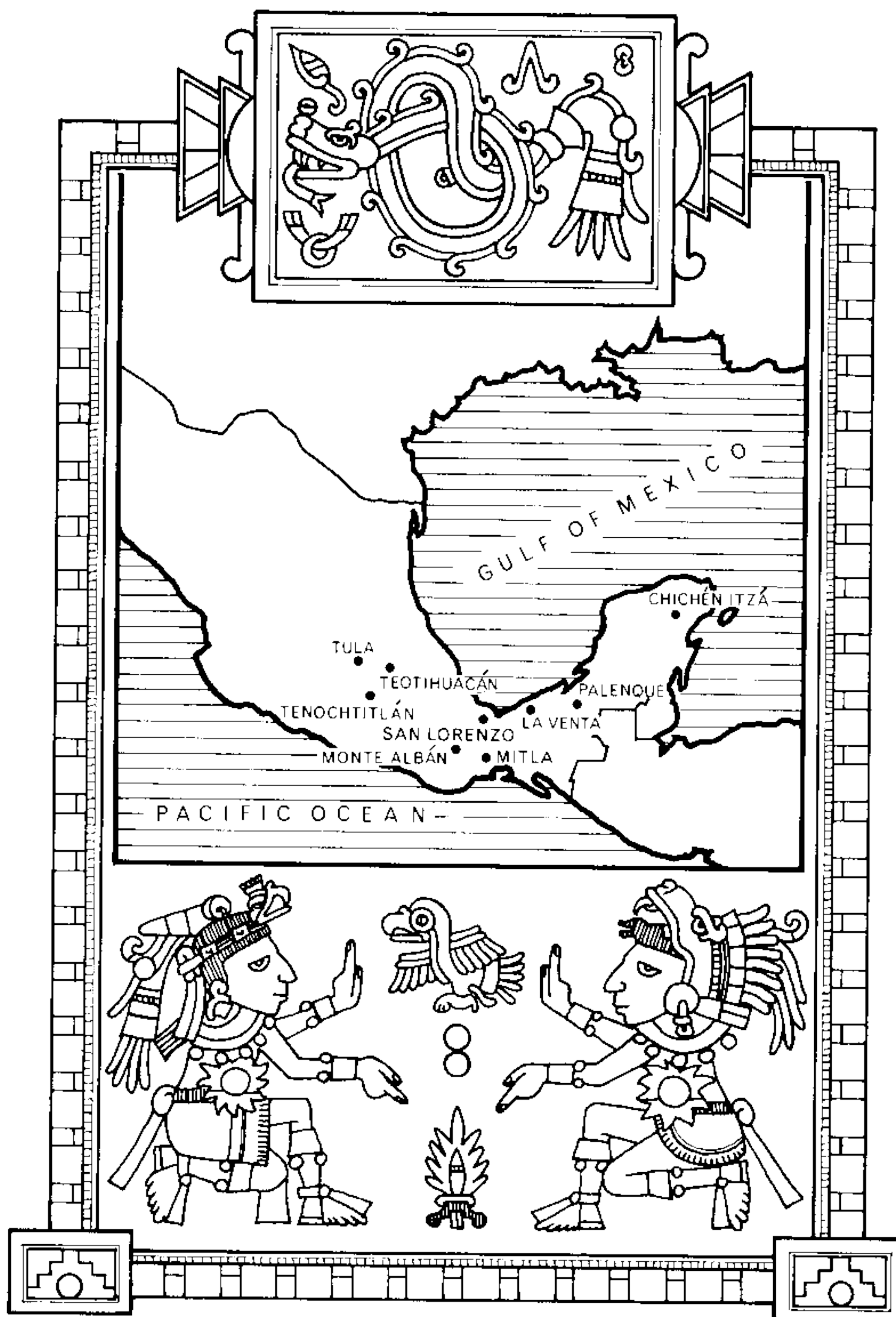
JOHN GREEN

Introduction and Captions by
Stanley Appelbaum



DOVER PUBLICATIONS, INC., NEW YORK





Illustrations copyright © 1991 by John Green.
Text copyright © 1991 by Dover Publications, Inc.
All rights reserved under Pan American and
International Copyright Conventions.

Published in Canada by General Publishing Company, Ltd.,
30 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Toronto, Ontario.
Published in the United Kingdom by Constable and Company, Ltd.,
3 The Lanchesters, 162–164 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 9ER.

Life in Ancient Mexico Coloring Book is a new work,
first published by Dover Publications, Inc., in 1991.

DOVER *Pictorial Archive* SERIES

This book belongs to the Dover Pictorial Archive Series. You may use the designs and illustrations for graphics and crafts applications, free and without special permission, provided that you include no more than four in the same publication or project. (For permission for additional use, please write to Dover Publications, Inc., 31 East 2nd Street, Mineola, N.Y. 11501.)

However, republication or reproduction of any illustration by any other graphic service whether it be in a book or in any other design resource is strictly prohibited.

International Standard Book Number: 0-486-26705-9

Manufactured in the United States of America
Dover Publications, Inc., 31 East 2nd Street, Mineola, N.Y. 11501

INTRODUCTION

The people of ancient Mexico (that is, the Native American inhabitants of the land prior to its conquest by Spain in 1521) achieved a brilliant civilization that continues to arouse admiration. Even though they lacked wheeled vehicles and animals for riding or for pulling loads, and possessed hardly any metal tools and weapons, they created large, well-built cities and produced beautiful objects that astonished the Europeans who first saw them. Many ancient Mexican sites are constantly visited by tourists from all over the world. The Indian groups living in Mexico today—there are at least 56 different ones—are the appreciative descendants of the Aztecs, Maya, Zapotecs and other ancient Mexicans.

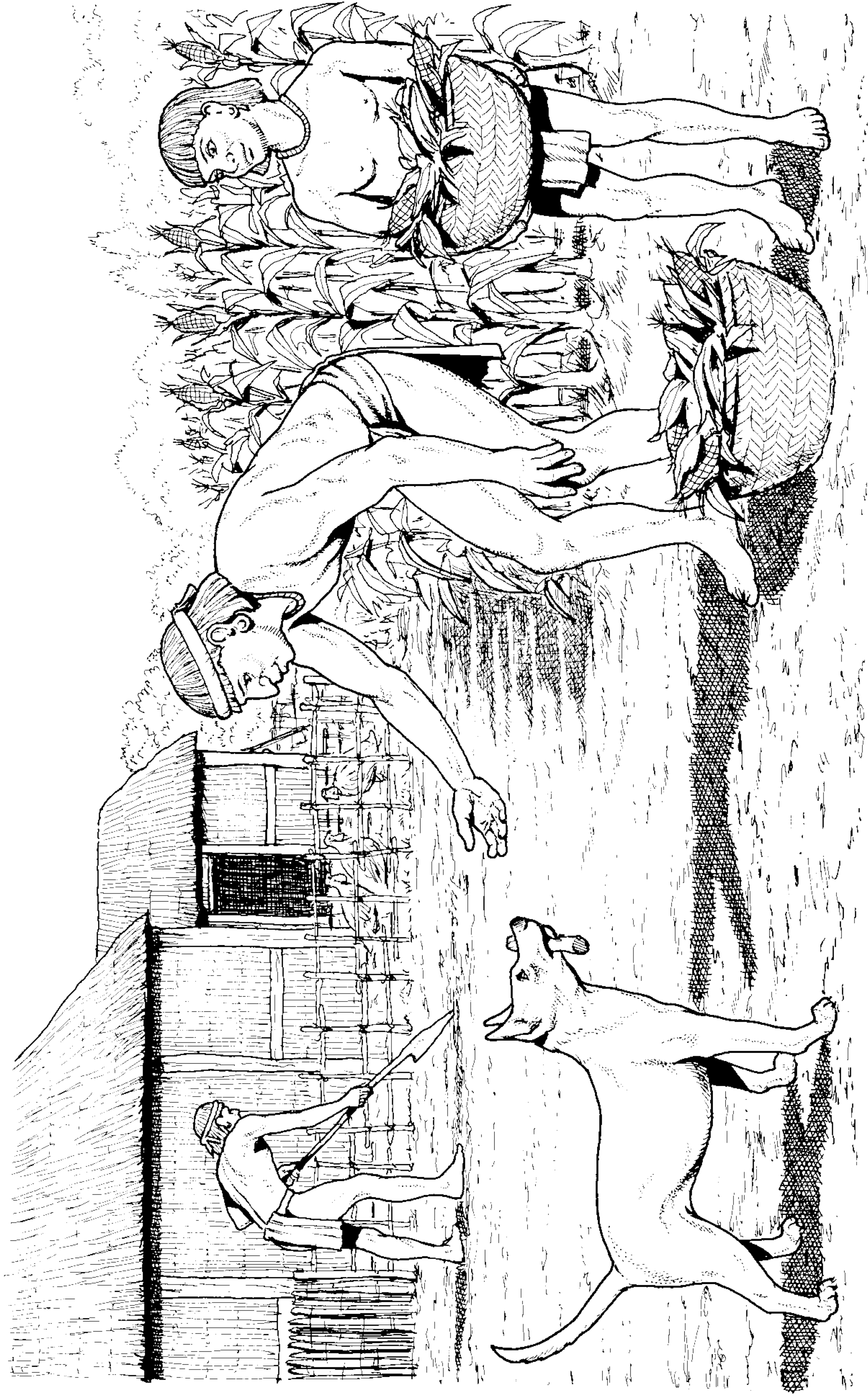
The present book briefly sketches the complex history of the region, while emphasizing aspects of everyday life. Beginning with the cultivation of maize about 5000 B.C., which made civilization possible (page 4), the survey moves to the earliest high culture, that of the Olmecs, who lived on the southern end of the Gulf Coast from about 1200 to 400 B.C., within the period of pre-Conquest history that scholars call the Formative (page 5). After the Olmecs, important centers of civilization sprang up in many areas. The people of Teotihuacán (page 6) were the most influential of the earliest major groups in the Valley of Mexico, the central highland area that was to be the heart of the Aztec Empire. Teotihuacán flourished during most of the Classic Period (which extended from about 200 to about 900 A.D.).

Pages 7 through 17 are devoted to one of the most important peoples of antiquity, the Maya of southernmost Mexico, in the Classic Period, with a discussion of their society, arts and sciences and special pursuits. The Post-Classic (about 900 to the Conquest) begins with a brief mention of the Toltecs, whose art and way of life affect the entire period; then a treatment of the great Yucatán city of Chichén Itzá exemplifies the attainments of the later Maya (pages 19 and 20). For convenience, the Zapotec and Mixtec civilization (in the modern state of Oaxaca), which lasted up to the Conquest, is then discussed as a whole (pages 21–23), although the site of Monte Albán is one of the oldest, going back to the Formative Period. Finally, pages 24 through 47 cover numerous aspects of the history and daily life of the Aztecs, about whom the most is known by far. The book concludes appropriately with the Spanish Conquest (page 48).

Of course, there were many other important cultures, such as those on the Gulf Coast later than the Olmecs (Veracruz, El Tajín and Remojadas) and those in the (modern) western states of Nayarit, Jalisco and Colima. Interested readers should try to see the fine works of art from those areas.

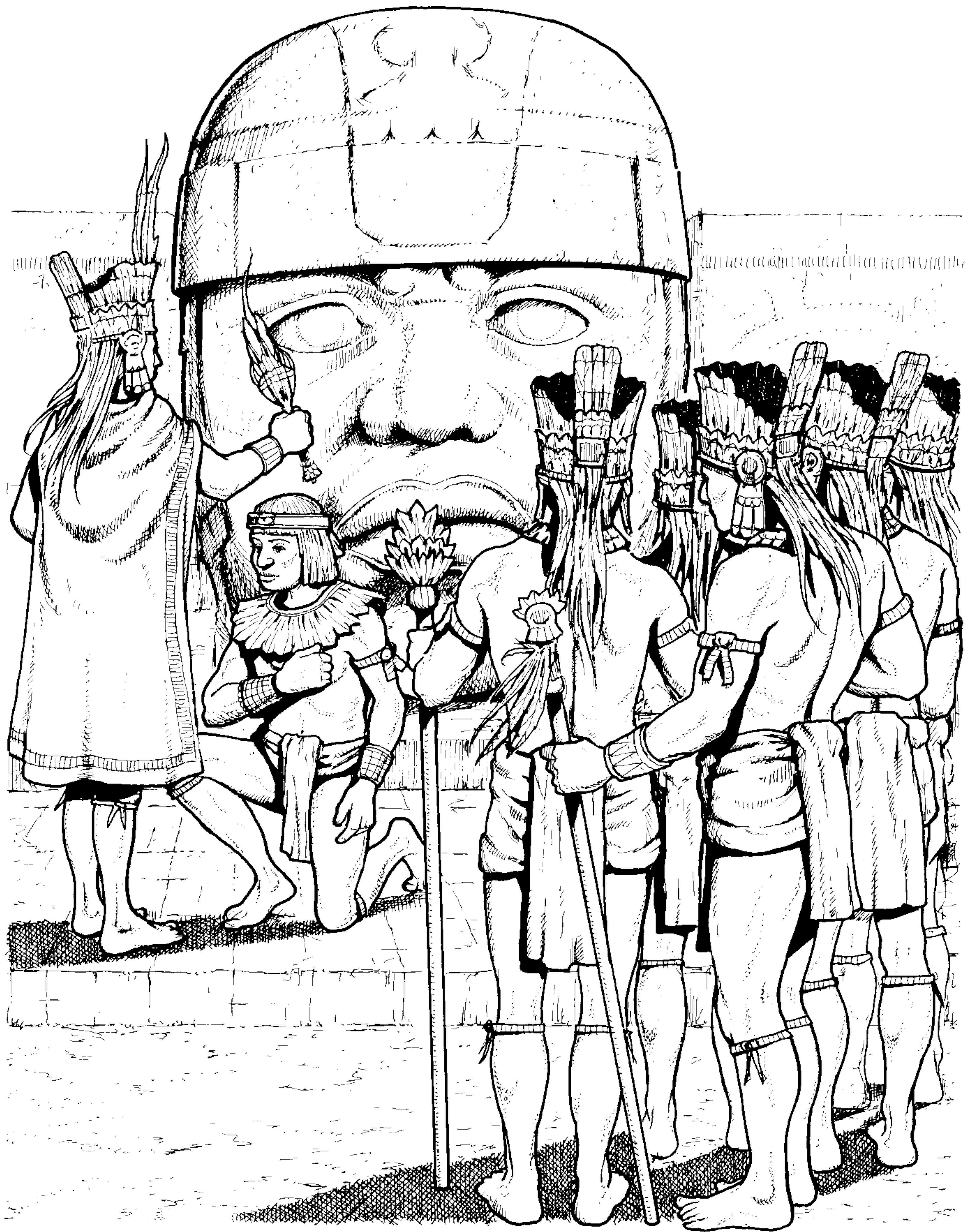
Our information on ancient Mexico comes partly from archaeological excavations and subsequent scholarly research, and to some extent from oral and written tradition, but also very largely from books written and illustrated shortly after the Conquest by and for the early Spanish missionaries, especially among the Aztecs and Maya. Many of the pictures of everyday life in the present book are based on actual illustrations from sources as early as the sixteenth century. (A handful of books survive from before the Conquest, too; see pages 15 and 23.)

The captions in this book reflect recent scholarship and findings. The spelling of proper names is based on that found in most scholarly works and in current Spanish-language books published in Mexico.



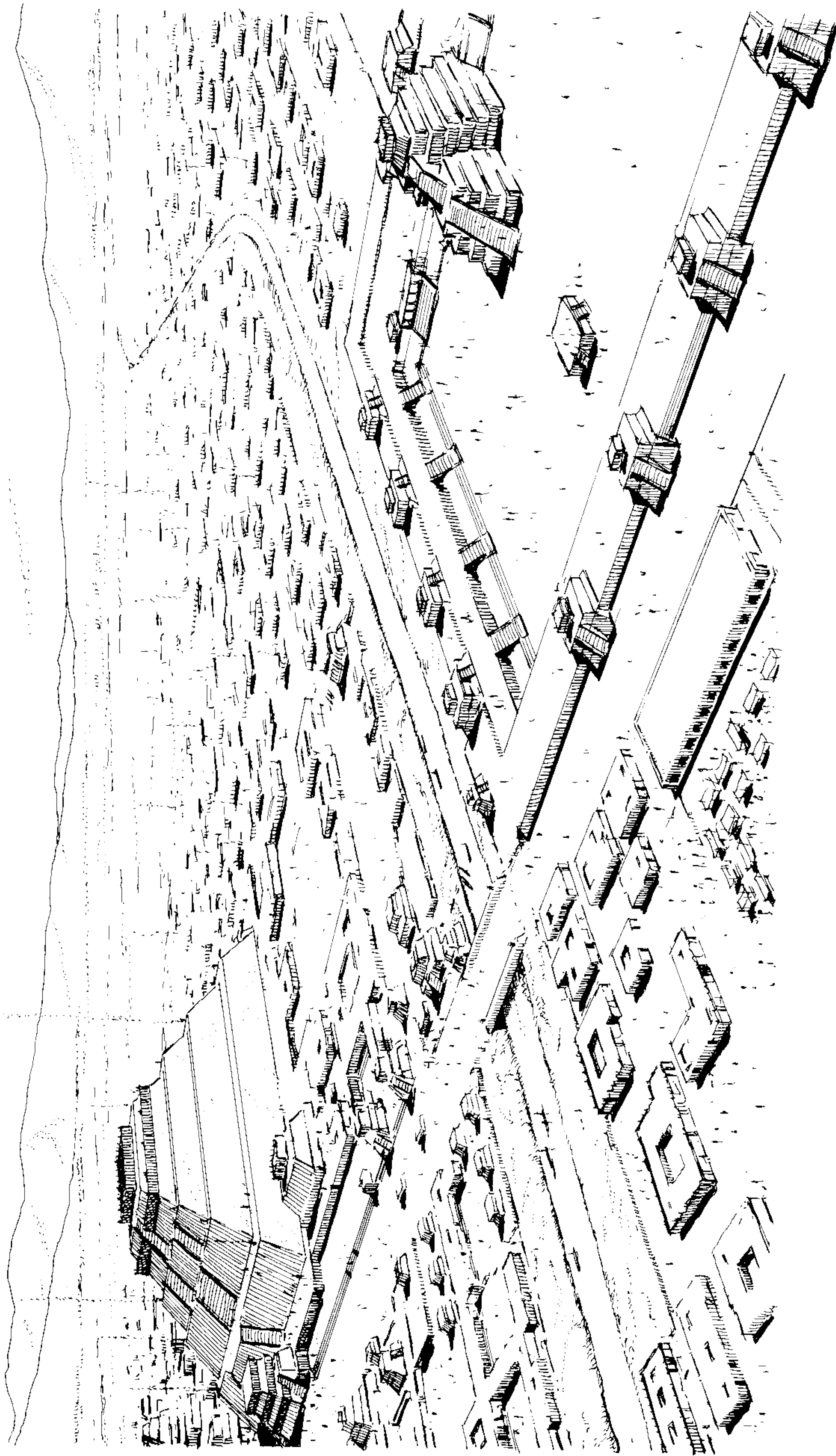
Ancient Mexican cornfield. None of the greatness of Mexican civilization would have been possible without the firm agricultural basis that assured a steady food supply for a growing population. Maize (Indian corn), still the mainstay of the diet of much of the New World (and now of many other regions as well), was domesticated from wild plants by the Mexicans at least as early as 5000 B.C. Later, irrigation was extensively practiced. The traditional Mexican Indian

cornfield is the *milpa*, a plot of burnt-over ground that needs to lie fallow between fairly brief periods of use. Many types of beans and squash were other staples that ancient Mexico gave to the world. Among animals, only the dog and the turkey were domesticated. Since there were no suitable draft animals, the wheel, although known and used in toys, was never developed for practical purposes.



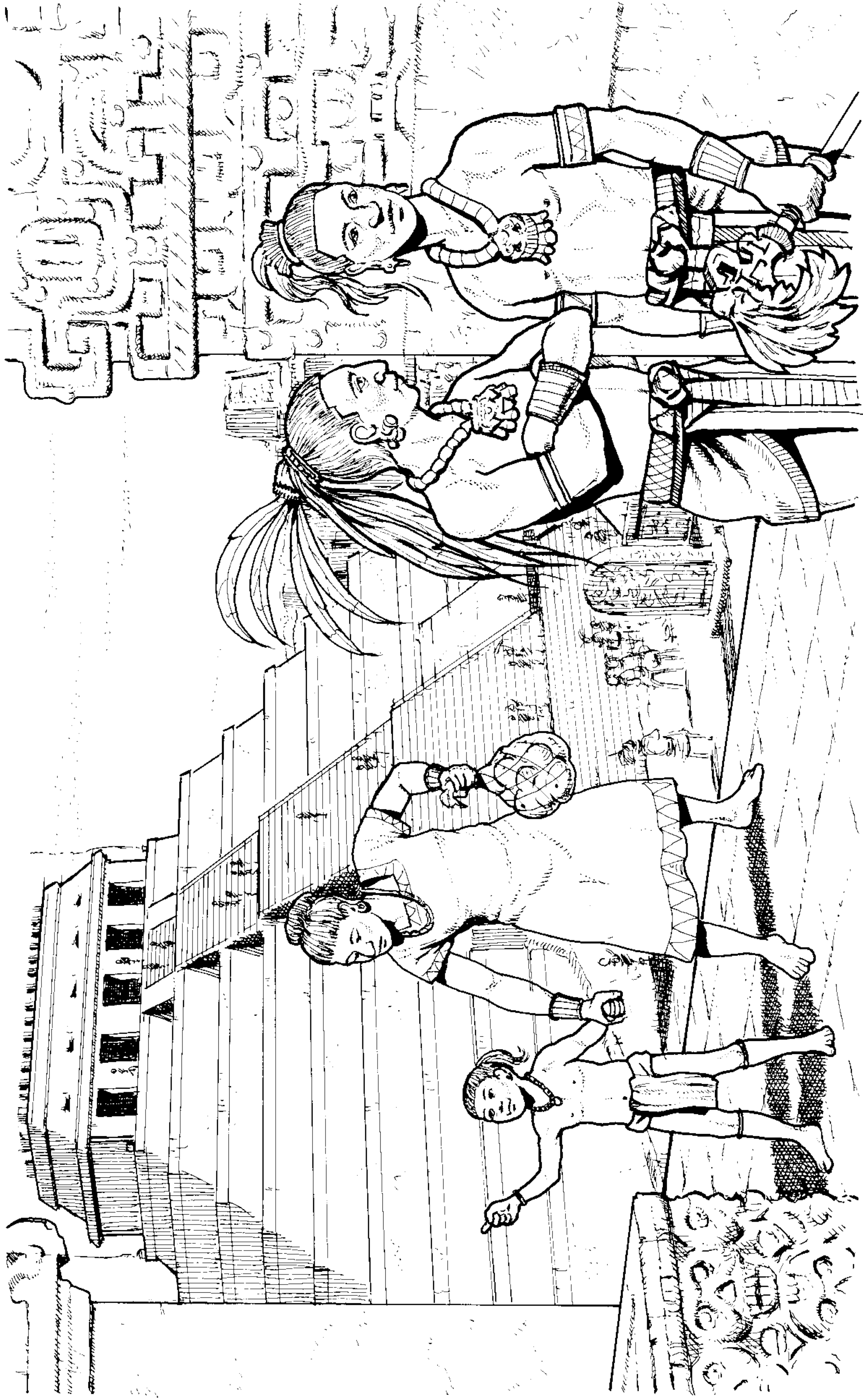
Honoring an Olmec ruler in front of a stone head. The earliest known high civilization in Mexico, crucial to all later developments, was that of the Olmecs in the rubber-producing jungles of modern Veracruz and Tabasco states on the Gulf. From about 1200 to 400 B.C. the Olmecs dominated their neighbors, trading extensively and probably developing the first Mexican

temple pyramids, calendar and writing system. Their famous carvings of human babies with feline fangs point to the existence of a jaguar cult. A tremendous achievement was the carving of enormous stone heads (possibly portraits of rulers wearing helmets), which had to be rafted from the quarries to such ceremonial sites as San Lorenzo and La Venta.



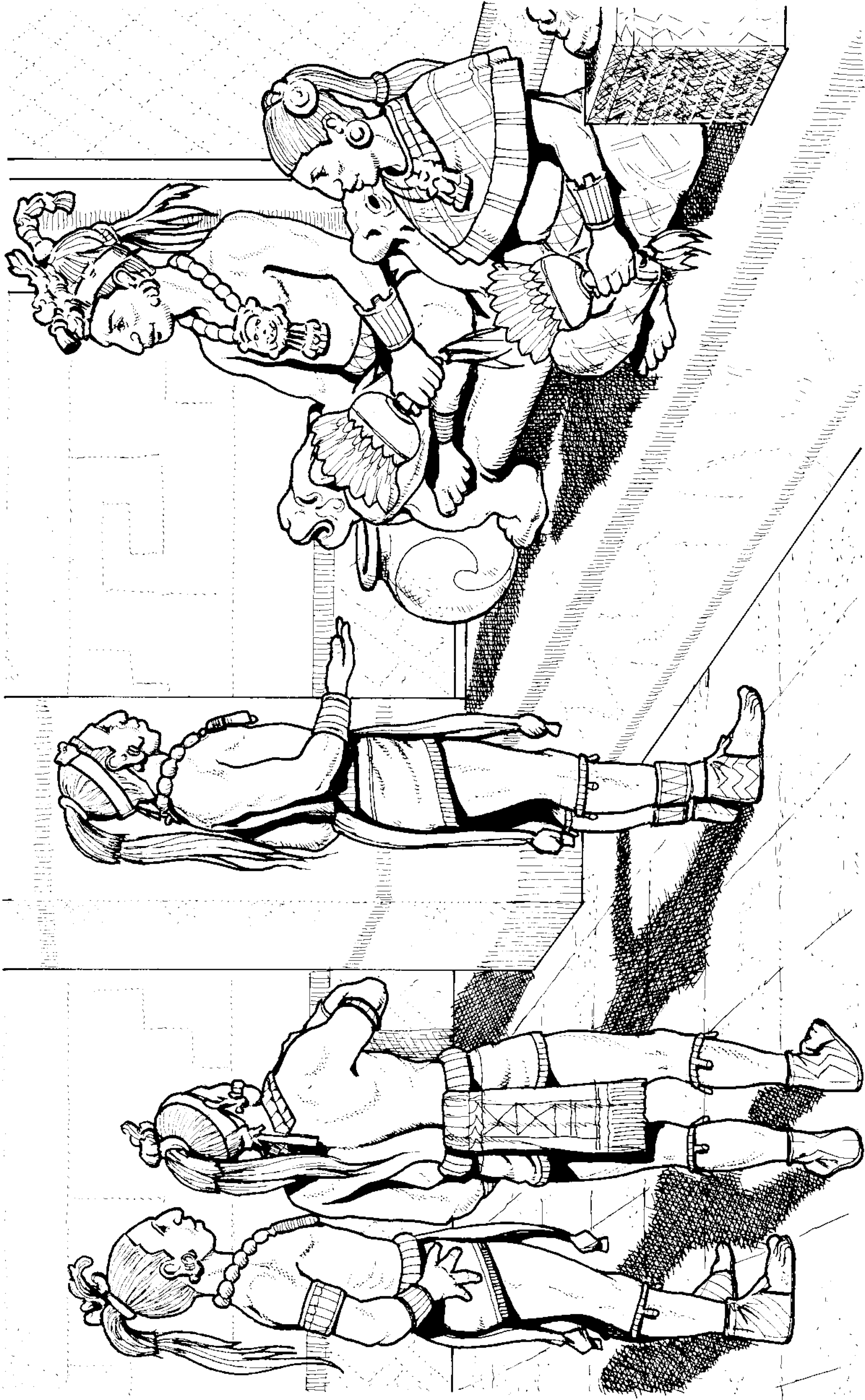
high, astronomically oriented and built over an ancient sacred cave. At the right, in its vast quadrangle (the Ciudadela), is the Temple of Quetzalcoatl (the Feathered Serpent). The city, which may have had 200,000 inhabitants, was the highly influential center of a far-flung empire that may have been of an economic and cultural nature rather than military and political.

View of Teotihuacán. Among the first major cultures in the central Valley of Mexico was that of Teotihuacán, about 30 miles north of Mexico City. The largest city ever built in ancient Mexico, it was begun about 200 B.C. and eventually attained an area of nine square miles. It was apparently destroyed about 750 A.D. This view shows the four-mile-long, palace-lined main thoroughfare, today called the Street of the Dead. At the left is the Pyramid of the Sun, over 200 feet



Classic Maya city scene at Palenque. It is not known what native groups the Olmecs and Teotihuacanos belonged to or what languages they spoke. The Maya, however, who lived in parts of present-day Guatemala, Belize, Honduras and El Salvador as well as southernmost Mexico (Tabasco, Chiapas and the Yucatán peninsula), have left two million direct descendants in the same area, still speaking dialects of Mayan. Their civilization, the most complex and sophisti-

cated in the ancient New World, may have featured villages by 2000 B.C. and cities by 600 B.C. Pages 7 through 17 cover the so-called Classic Period, about 200 to 900 A.D. The most beautiful Mexican Maya site is Palenque, in Chiapas, which flourished in the 6th through 8th centuries. The tall structure in this view is the Temple of the Inscriptions, in which the great local ruler Pacal was buried in 683 A.D.



Maya ruler holding audience. There was never a single monarch over the whole Maya area, but a number of local hereditary rulers of city-states that sometimes became capitals of a larger regional alliance. Rulers were both military and religious leaders of their people. They wore symbolic clothing and ornaments that linked them to the gods, and performed special ceremonies intended not only to protect

their land but to allow the universe to continue to exist. Elaborate palaces were built as settings for the many rituals and courtly activities in which the rulers had to participate. Recent research has shown that many of the famous Mayan stelae (large carved upright stone slabs), formerly thought to be concerned only with religion and the calendar, were really erected in honor of rulers and their exploits.



Maya ruler and a female relative in a bloodletting rite. Throughout ancient Mexico, human blood was the most precious substance that could be offered to the sun and the other gods. Among the Maya, in addition to sacrifices of high-ranking captives, there were also painful but not fatal sacrifices made by rulers upon ascending the throne and on other state occasions.

For instance, a rope studded with thorns or stingray spines might be drawn through the tongue or other parts of the body. While in shock, the voluntary victims would attempt to join ancestors or gods in a vision. Even commoners underwent similar rites on important occasions. It has now been proved that the Maya were just as involved with blood rites as were other Mexican peoples.



Maya nobleman and noblewoman. Ancient Mexican societies, including the Mayan, were divided strictly into classes, with clearly assigned privileges and duties. The hereditary nobility were large landholders, and supplied leadership in politics, war and the professions. The princely figure shown here—bejeweled, ornamented with body and face paint, and wearing a deer-head helmet—is enjoying a cigar. Wild tobacco plants of

many species occur throughout the Western Hemisphere, and tobacco was smoked extensively by Native Americans both ritually and for pleasure. It was in Mexico that tobacco was first cultivated. The noblewoman may be drinking the native beverage made from cacao beans. This was too bitter for Europeans, who sweetened it with sugar to create hot chocolate.



Maya warrior. It was long thought that, unlike all their neighbors, the Maya were unusually peaceful. It is now confirmed that they were almost constantly engaged in war, usually against other Maya groups. The rulers led their troops into battle, and their victories were celebrated on stone monuments. Weaponry included shields tufted with feathers, spears tipped with flint,

staves, clubs, axes, knives, slings and dart-throwers. Sometimes a quilted upper garment was worn for protection. Ambushes and other secret stratagems were frequently employed. Captives, wanted for enslaving or for sacrificing, were often taken in hand-to-hand combat. It is not yet known for certain if either territory or tribute was actually gained as a result of victory.



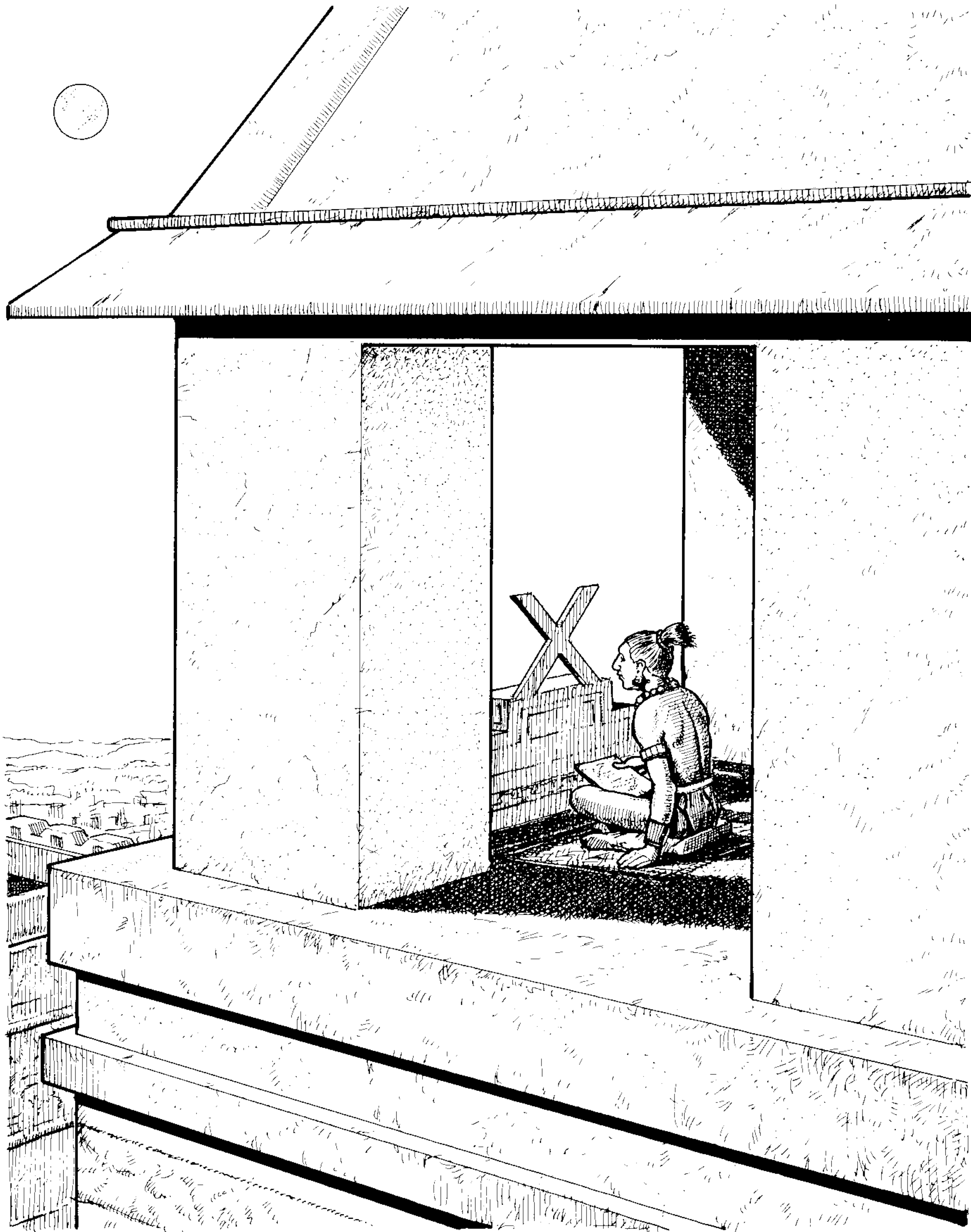
Maya ceremonial ball game. Archaeologists have found hundreds of ball courts in sites of many periods all over Mexico and nearby countries (not to mention the Caribbean and southern areas of the present United States). The game was deeply rooted

in the life of the people. Although played for sport and for wagers, it had definite religious significance as well. In the Maya book *Popol Vuh*, the divine twin heroes play this game for their lives against the lords of the underworld. In reality, losing teams



were sometimes sacrificed. On a long, narrow court, with spectators above, a rubber ball had to hit a marker, or be propelled through a high stone ring, without the use of hands. Players wore hip guards and other special accoutrements, which were

reproduced artistically in stone in some parts of Mexico. The court illustrated here is based on the one at Chichén Itzá in the Yucatán (see pages 19 and 20).



Maya astronomer. Seated in an observatory tower (based on the four-story one in the Palace complex at Palenque), this priest is using a sighting cross to track heavenly bodies. The Maya's extensive familiarity with the skies and their remarkably advanced mathematical knowledge enabled them to use an accurate calendar to regulate their activities and keep records. The Mayan calendar, similar to that of other ancient Mexicans but

highly refined, not only combined the 365-day solar year with a 260-day count to create a 52-year Calendar Round for most practical purposes, but also included a Long Count to take in very large time periods. Since this Long Count had a definite historical beginning, it has been possible to establish specific European-calendar correspondences for many datings on Mayan monuments.



Maya sculptor carving glyphs onto a monument. The Maya developed the most elaborate writing system in ancient America. In this very complex system, the images, or glyphs, combine large elements that stand for the idea of a word with smaller elements that stand for the sounds of syllables and that indicate the grammar. Moreover, the glyphs changed in the course of time, and different forms of them were used for differ-

ent purposes. Although the system is far from being totally deciphered, more inscriptions are being successfully read all the time, showing the Maya's great interest in royal and military affairs and the incorrectness of earlier views that the inscriptions were exclusively religious and calendrical. Glyphs occur on architecture, sculpture and ceramics and in the three or four surviving Maya screenfold books.



Maya artist painting pottery. Maya ceramics are varied and beautiful in form, and are often painted with elaborate scenes of everyday life, the royal court, war and sacrifice, mythological scenes and abstract designs. Mural painting was also an important Mayan art (the most famous murals are at Bonampak, in the state of Chiapas, Mexico). Stone and wood sculpture, in relief or engraved, on stelae and buildings, and stone or ceramic sculp-

ture in the round were major art forms. Jewelry and costly objects were carved from jade, onyx and other rare stones and minerals, as well as from shell and bone. Architecture, however, was probably the greatest artistic achievement of the Maya, both for the remarkable individual buildings and for the grandiose layouts of very large urban and ceremonial complexes.



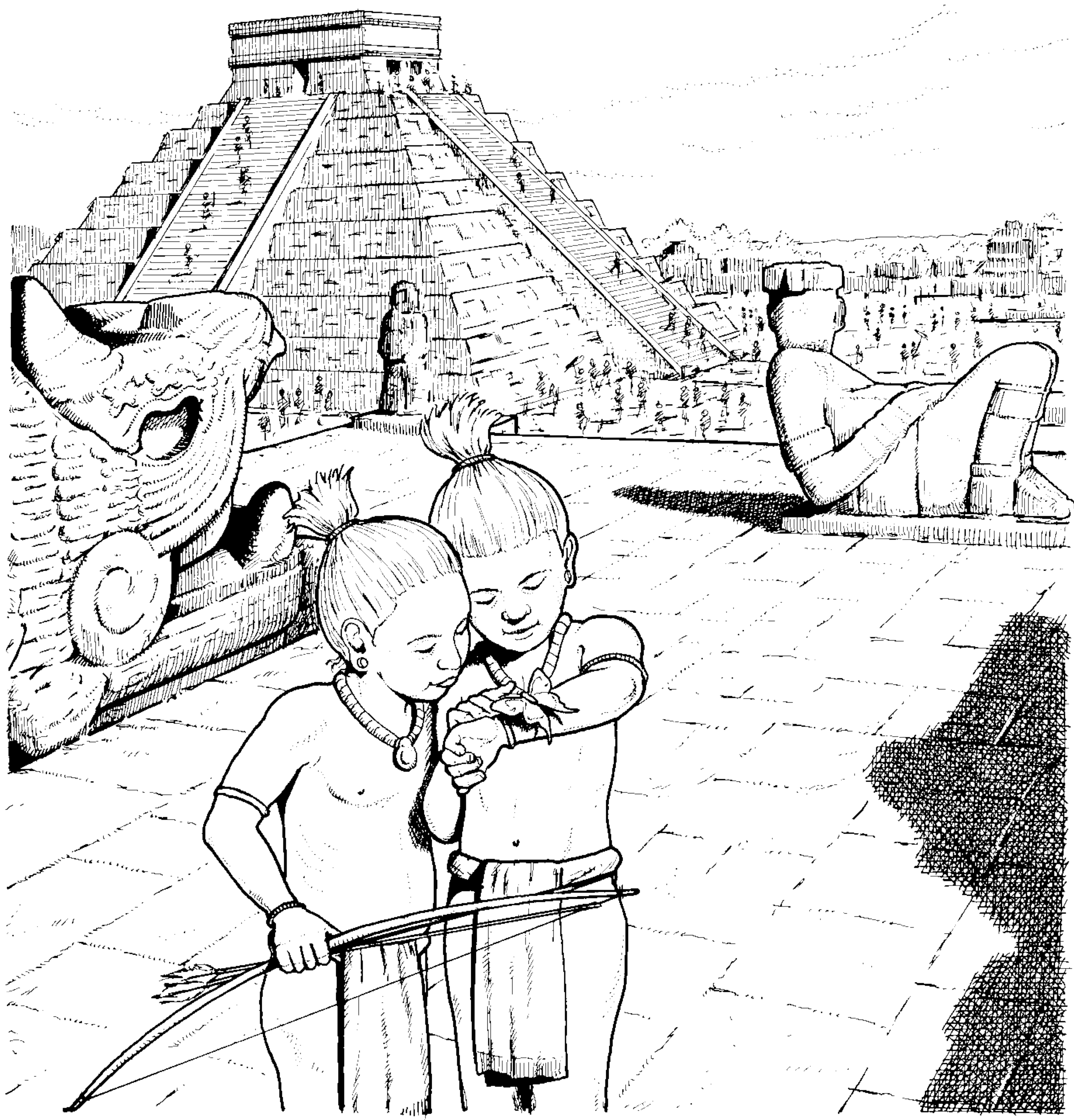
Maya traders with intercity coastal canoes. Trade was essential to the ancient Mexican civilizations, few being able on their own to raise all the food or manufacture all the goods they needed or desired. Maya merchants were active on the Gulf of Mexico as well as on rivers and overland. The group known as the Putún or Chontal Maya, from the northwest of the Maya realm, became especially active as seagoing merchants, and perhaps also as fighters, at the end of the Classic Period (about

900 A.D.), when the long-established Maya city-states, particularly in the central region, faded away for unknown reasons (guesses include invasions, soil exhaustion and revolt by commoners). Since the downfall of Teotihuacán about 750 A.D. (see page 6), there had been a power vacuum in Central Mexico as well. An era had ended, and new peoples and regroupings came to the fore.



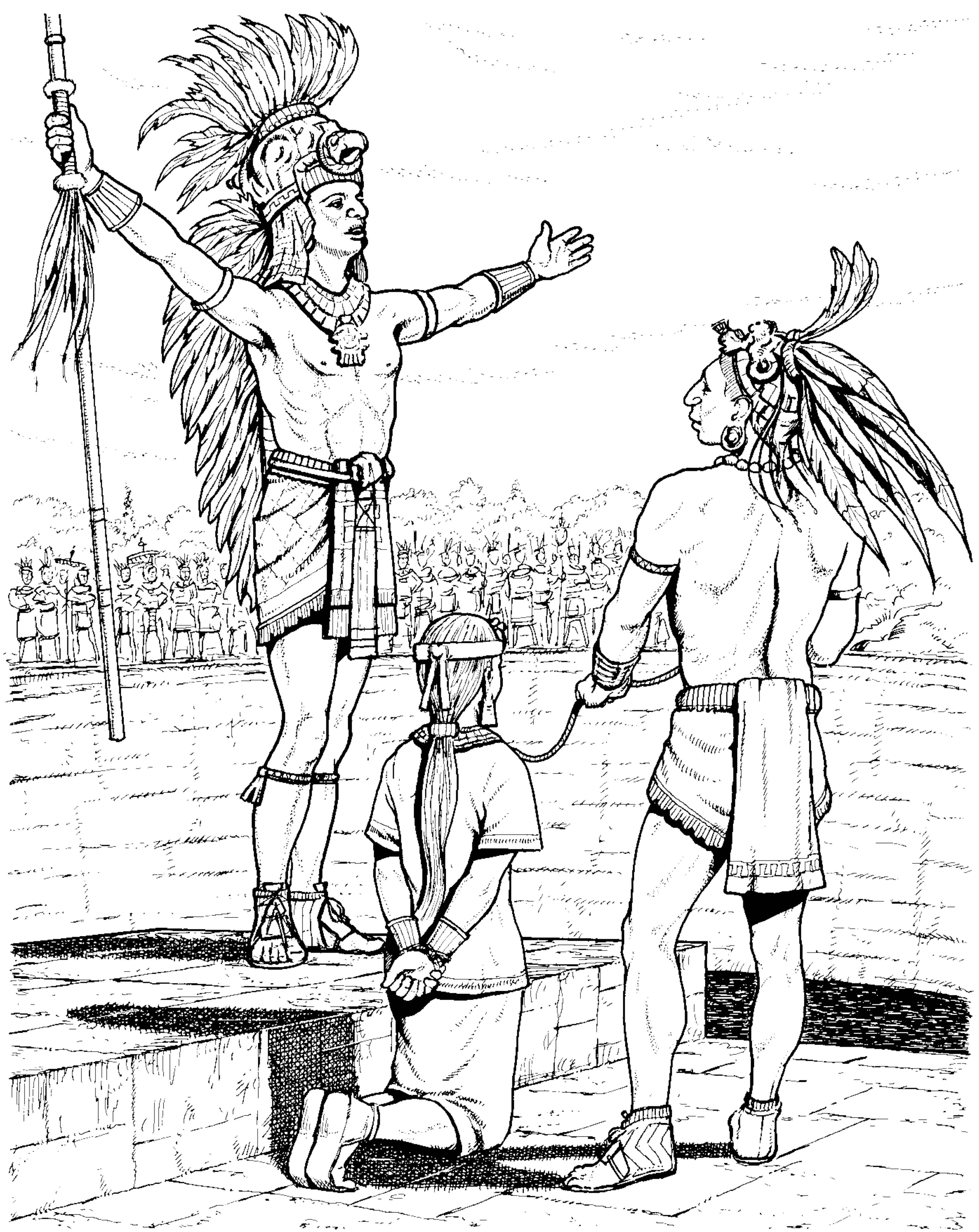
The Toltecs. The entire Post-Classic Period (about 900–1500 A.D.) was apparently largely colored by a little-known people: the Toltecs. In the architecture of their capital, Tula (in the state of Hidalgo, about 50 miles northwest of Mexico City), there is an unmistakable note of militarism—best exemplified in the 15-foot-high warrior columns that supported the roof of one pyramid-top temple. Tula was abandoned in the 12th century,

probably after invasions by northern peoples. The Aztecs (who may have been among the invaders) were admittedly influenced in many ways by the Toltecs. Controversy rages about whether the Maya were also—by direct Toltec immigration, conquest or otherwise. But, in whichever direction the influence traveled, Post-Classic Maya sites in the Yucatán show many non-Classic features that are identical with aspects of Tula.



Later Maya: View of Chichén Itzá. In the Post-Classic Period the center of Maya civilization was in the Yucatán, where the ruins from this era seem to combine many Toltec elements (colonnades, chacmools, etc.) with older Mayan features. The most visited Yucatán site is Chichén Itzá, covering an area of at least six square miles. It was inhabited uninterruptedly from the 3rd through the 13th centuries A.D., with its greatest glory in its last 250 years. The children in the picture are standing on the

terrace of the Temple of the Warriors, near one of the serpent columns (left) and a chacmool (right), a reclining figure connected with human sacrifices. The tall building (100 feet) is the so-called Castillo, or Temple of Kukulcán (the Feathered Serpent), with its 365 steps, special solar alignment and inner temple. Bows and arrows were a late form of weaponry in pre-Columbian Mexico.



Sacrifice at the cenote in Chichén Itzá. Life at Chichén Itzá, which is located on a dry limestone plateau, was only made possible by the existence of subsurface water and natural sink-holes called cenotes. The main cenote on the site, today some 200 feet in diameter and descending 40 feet to water level, was considered sacred, probably to the rain god Chac. Connected with the ceremonial center (the Castillo and other structures) by a 900-foot-long causeway, it was the scene of human sacrifice

(men, women and children), perhaps in times of drought. It is said that any victim who survived the immersion for several hours would be pulled out to report messages from the gods. Masses of incense and rubber figurines were also thrown in, as well as textiles and precious pieces of carved jade and imported metal objects (gold, copper, etc.). Hundreds of such articles have been retrieved in the 20th century.



Oaxaca: Zapotecs at Monte Albán. Like the Maya, the Zapotecs created an outstanding culture of their own and still have direct descendants today in their original area. Their chief pre-Columbian center was Monte Albán, picturesquely sited on hilly terrain near the modern city of Oaxaca, capital of the state of that name. Monte Albán was inhabited from about 500 B.C. and reached its peak by about 800 A.D., with 25,000 people and an area of 2½ square miles. It declined after the fall of Teotihuacán

(see page 6). In the early Post-Classic Period, the Zapotecs created a beautiful new ceremonial center at Mitla, about 25 miles to the east, but by the time of the Spanish Conquest, most of their territory was under the control of the Mixtecs (see pages 22 and 23). Aside from their excellent architecture, the ancient Zapotecs are also renowned for their ceramic funerary urns with elaborate mythological figures.



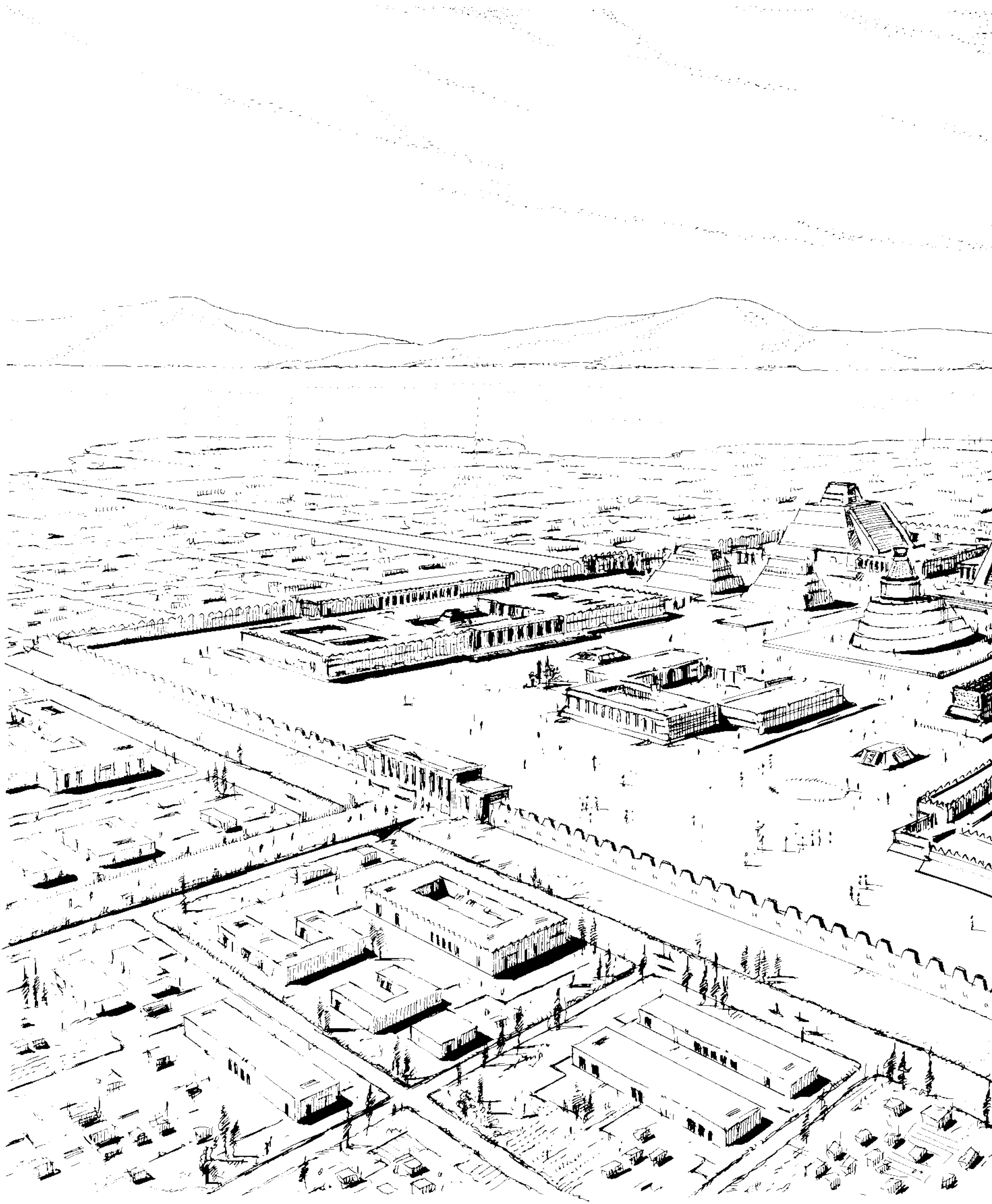
Oaxaca: Mixtec goldsmiths. The Mixtecs, who, coming from the near north, gradually took over the Zapotec realm in the Post-Classic Period, were never fully conquered by the Aztecs. Women played a greater role in government and war among the Mixtecs than among any other ancient group. Influenced by the Toltecs, the Mixtecs became artists and craftsmen highly valued

in the entire Mexican world, producing fine pottery and carving in fine stone, bone and coral. They were especially prominent in metalwork, and are considered to have produced the finest turquoise mosaics and gold jewelry of any ancient Mexicans. Here one man is melting gold in a brazier while the other is fashioning the soft gold into an ornamental breastplate.



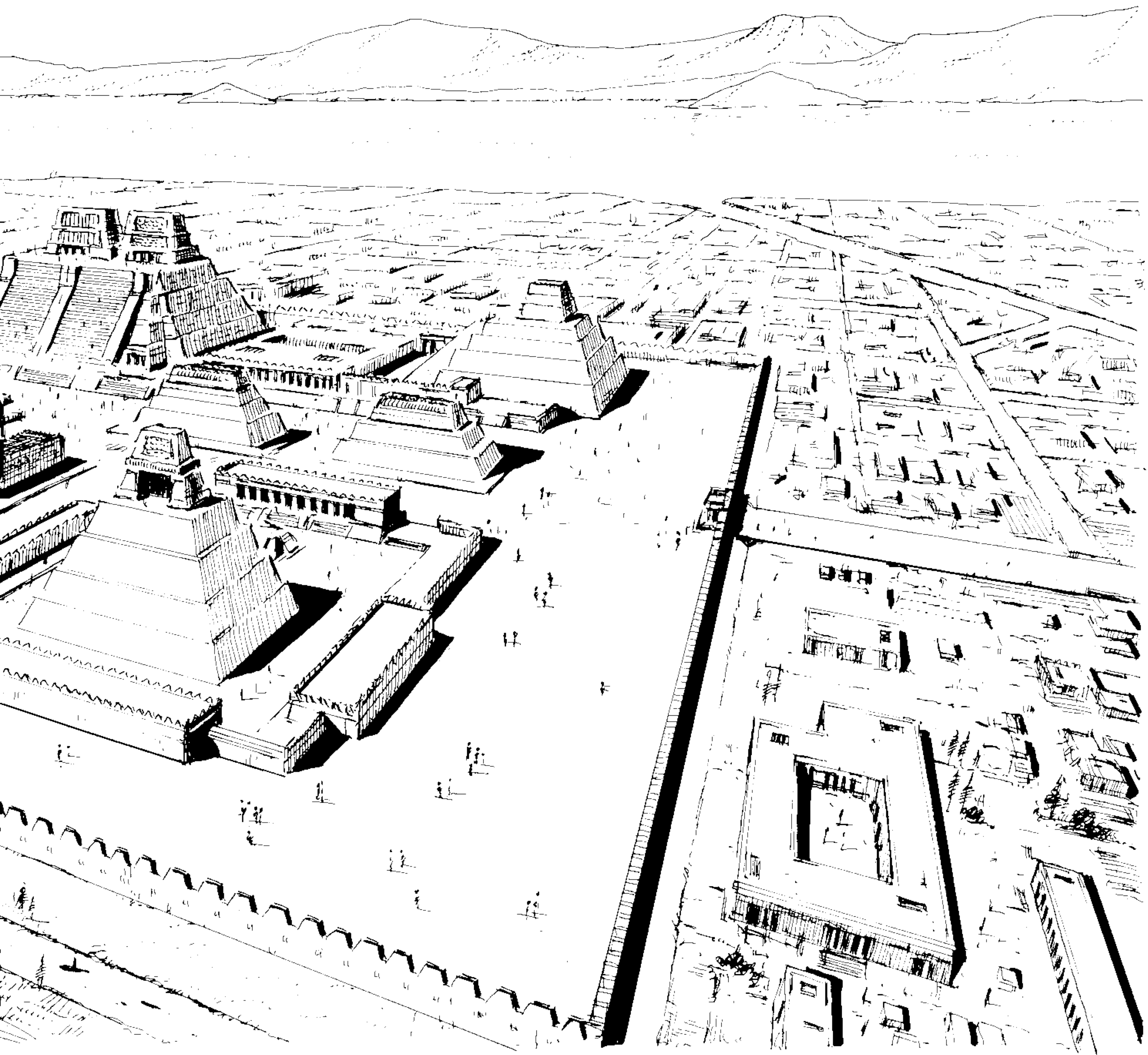
Oaxaca: Mixtec artist painting a codex. Surely the most fascinating Mixtec objects to us today are their painted codices, screenfold bark-paper or animal-skin books, chiefly pictorial, that recount the warlike family histories of Mixtec rulers: their alliances by marriage, conquests of cities and the like. Eight such Mixtec historical books survive (including the famous 94-page,

37-foot-long Codex Nuttall) which make it possible to trace events as far back as 700 or 800 A.D. In addition, we still possess six of their pre-Conquest ritual and calendrical books. Mixtec books are thought to have been "portable murals" that were hung on walls.



The Aztecs: View of Tenochtitlán. When the Spanish arrived in Mexico early in the 16th century, the central valley was dominated by the Aztec Empire. The Aztecs, or Mexica, had worked their way down slowly from the northwest as just one among the many underdeveloped groups who coveted the easier life to the south. After long years as outcasts, they struck roots,

about 1325 A.D., at the site that would one day become Mexico City. Their capital there, Tenochtitlán, which attained a population of 200,000 to 300,000, was built on an island and additional reclaimed land within a large lake that has since been drained. Three broad causeways connected the city to the shores. Tenochtitlán was divided into four quarters, with its ceremonial pre-



cinct (seen in this view) at the center. This precinct (on the same general site as the main square of the present city, the Plaza de la Constitución, or "el Zócalo") was dominated by the 110-foot-high Templo Mayor, the double temple just to the right of center in this view. Magnificent works of art have been found in its remains. The left-hand temple was dedicated to the rain god

Tlaloc; the companion temple, to the war god Huitzilopochtli. Other temples, religious structures and schools were located in the walled precinct. (The remainder of this book will be concerned with the Aztecs, the ancient Mexican group about whom we are by far the best informed.)



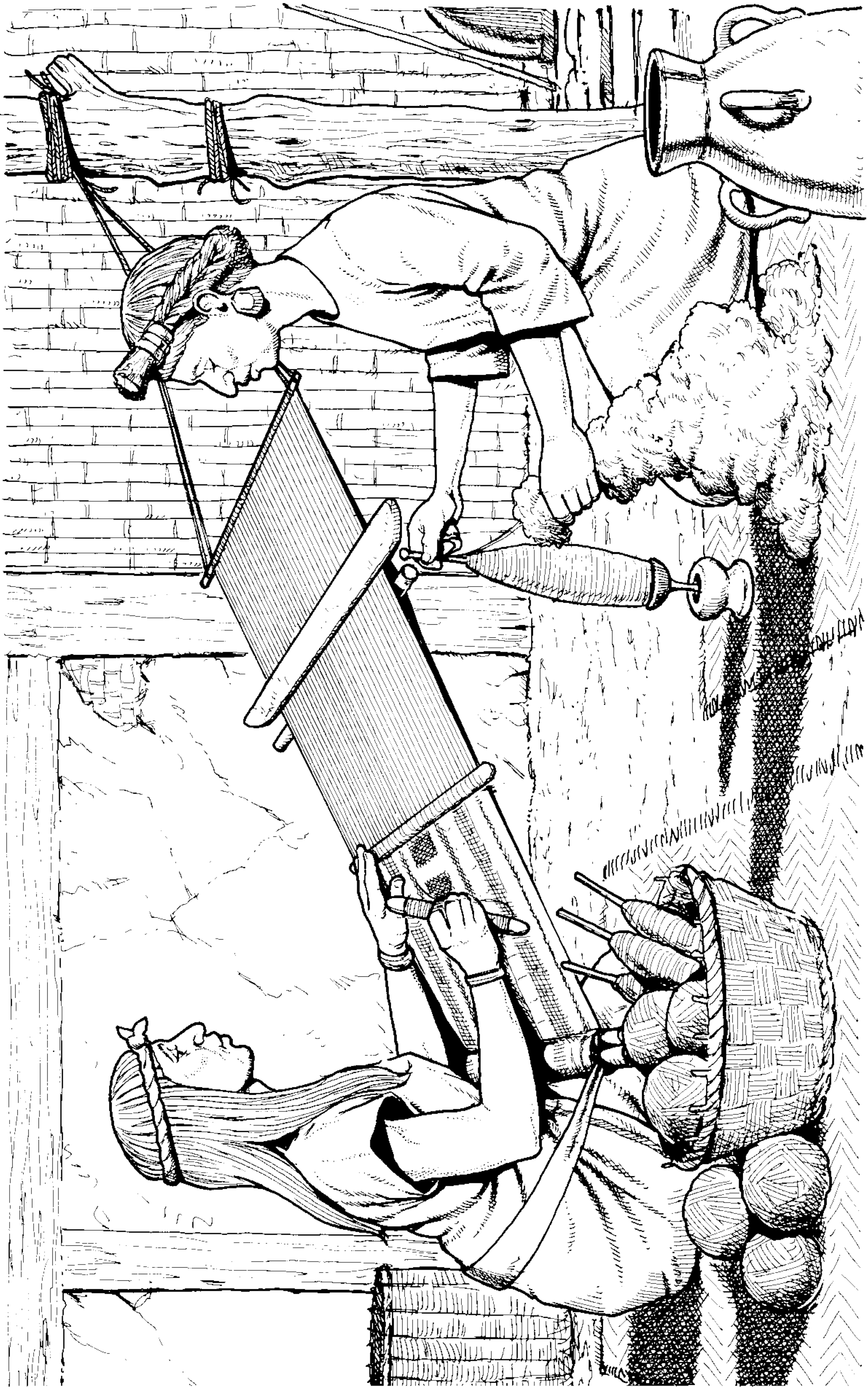
Aztec emperor Motecuhzoma II (Montezuma). Aztec rulers, who had to belong to the royal line, were elected by a small group of top religious and military leaders. They had supreme authority in warfare and foreign affairs, while a sort of prime minister looked after domestic matters. The emperor, whose native title literally meant "great orator," was treated like a god on earth. His life was one of great luxury, although subject to unending ritual. The huge palace grounds included gardens

and an extensive zoo. Several of the earlier Aztec rulers were military geniuses and forceful empire builders, but Motecuhzoma II, who reigned from 1502 until his death in 1520, was a quiet man of a scholarly cast of mind. He was so deeply concerned with prophecies and omens that he made no firm resistance to Cortés, whom he regarded as an ancient god returning to his people.



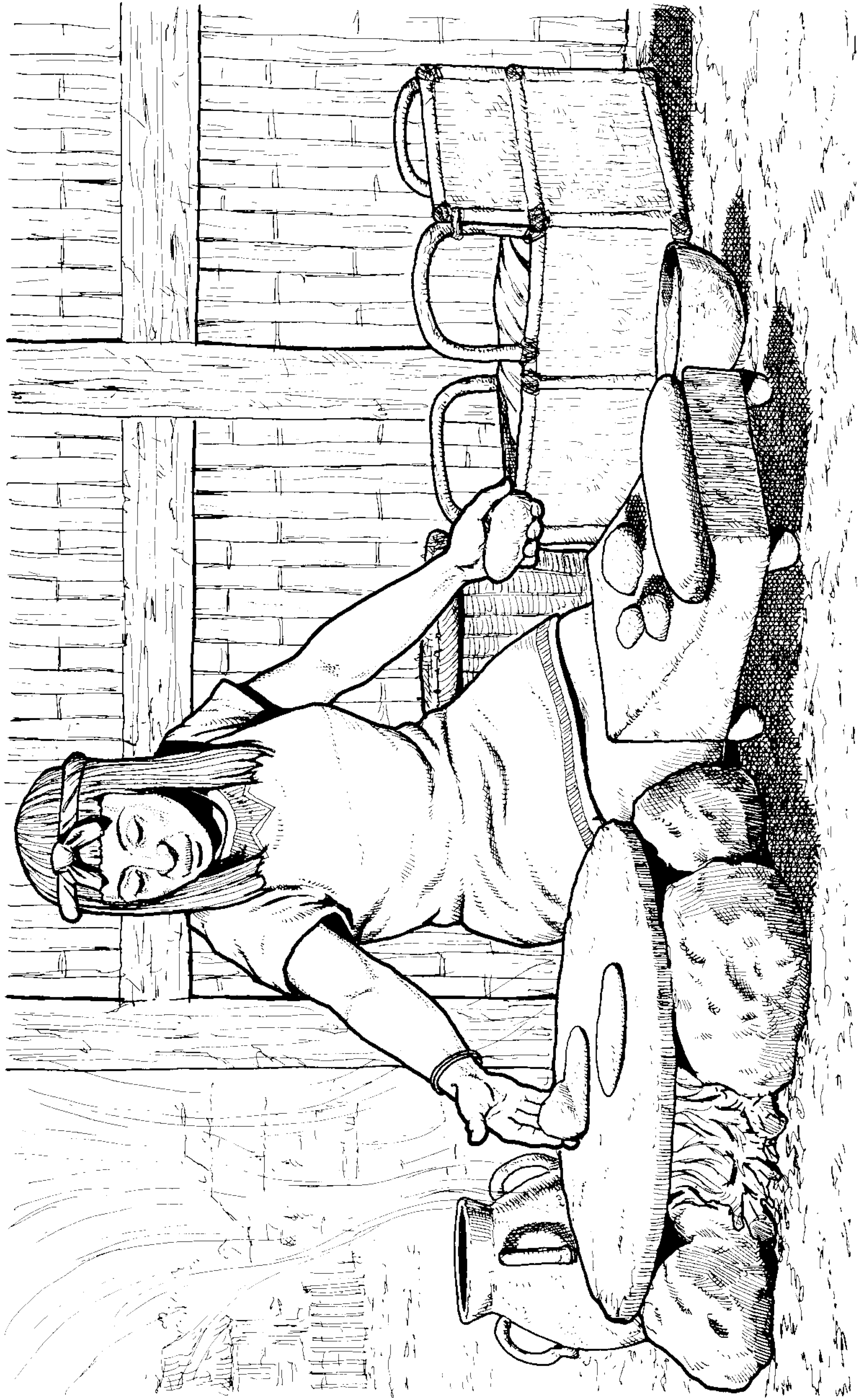
Aztec noblemen. Aztec society was divided into distinct social classes, with a major division existing between landowners (and the other well-to-do: noblemen, warriors and merchants) and the landless (artisans, other commoners, serfs and slaves). Noblemen owned large estates, some private and some connected to the office they held. They served as judges, administrators,

rulers of subject cities, ambassadors and tribute collectors. Their position was gained by achievement and merit, especially prowess in war. Promotion to the nobility was thus possible for anyone, but privilege tended to be kept within certain families. Noblemen could dress more extravagantly, could marry more than one wife and had schools of their own.



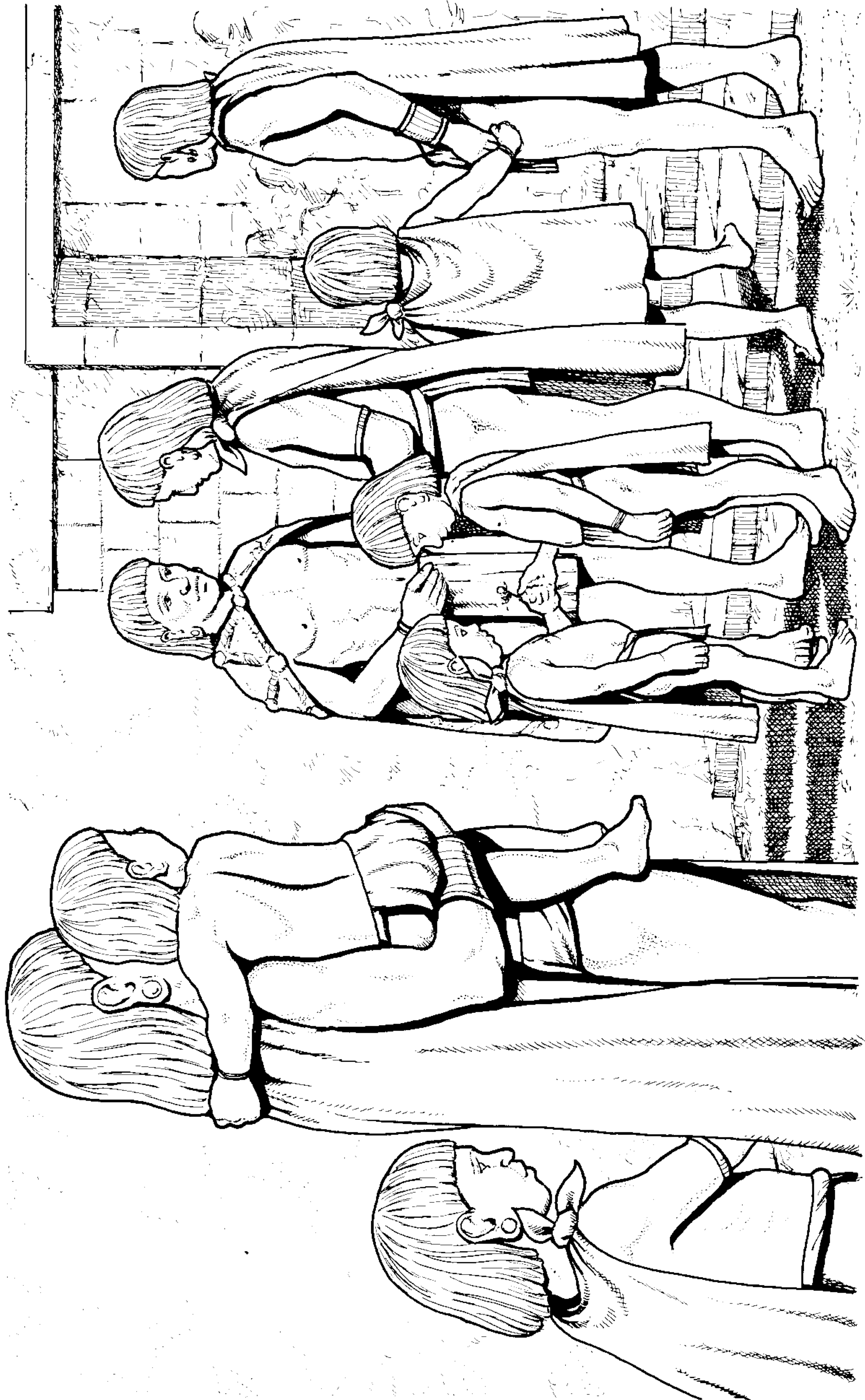
Aztec women: weaving at home. Women made cloth at home from cotton, plant fibers or rabbit hair. The yarn was spun by hand, with the lower end of the spindle either passing through a clay disc (such spindle whorls were sometimes beautifully ornamented) or, as in this picture, resting in a little ceramic holder. Girls were taught to spin at a very early age. Dyes for the yarn came from a variety of plant

and animal substances, including a red made from cochineal insects. The woman at the left is weaving on a simple backstrap loom. After weaving, cloth might be additionally embroidered or ornamented with feathers. The rush mats on the floor (*petates*) are still typical of Mexican rural interiors.



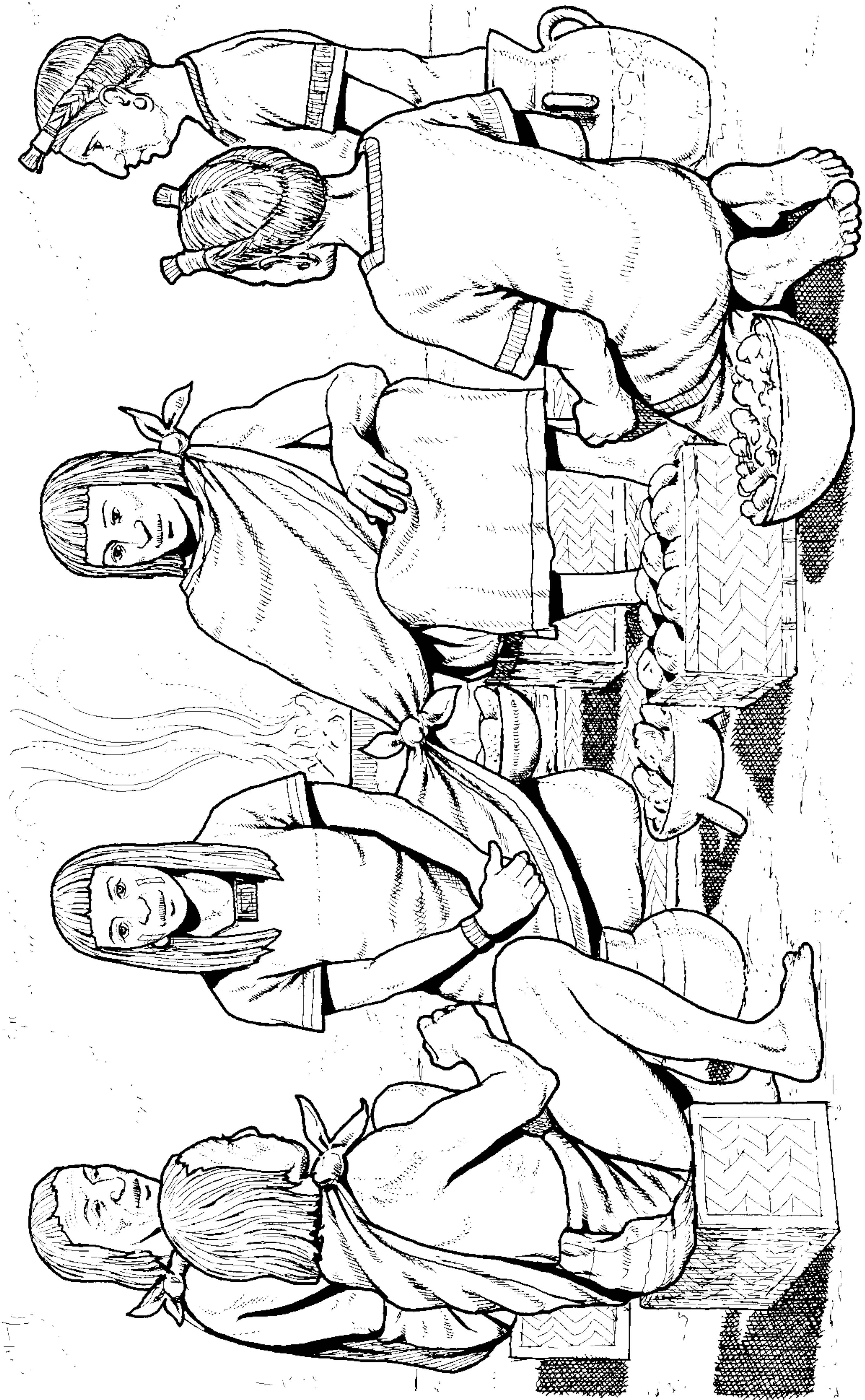
Aztec women: food preparation. Then as now, the staff of life of the Mexican home was the tortilla. In this simple thatch-roofed peasant hut of reeds, wood and clay, the unventilated hearth rests on stones and supports the circular stone griddle (*comal*). The maize is ground on the concave stone *metate* with the aid of a stone roller. The

tortillas are formed by patting and clapping with the hands. Besides maize and other vegetables, game and fish were important foodstuffs (page 35). Turkey stew was a favorite dish on festive occasions, and dogs were also raised for food.



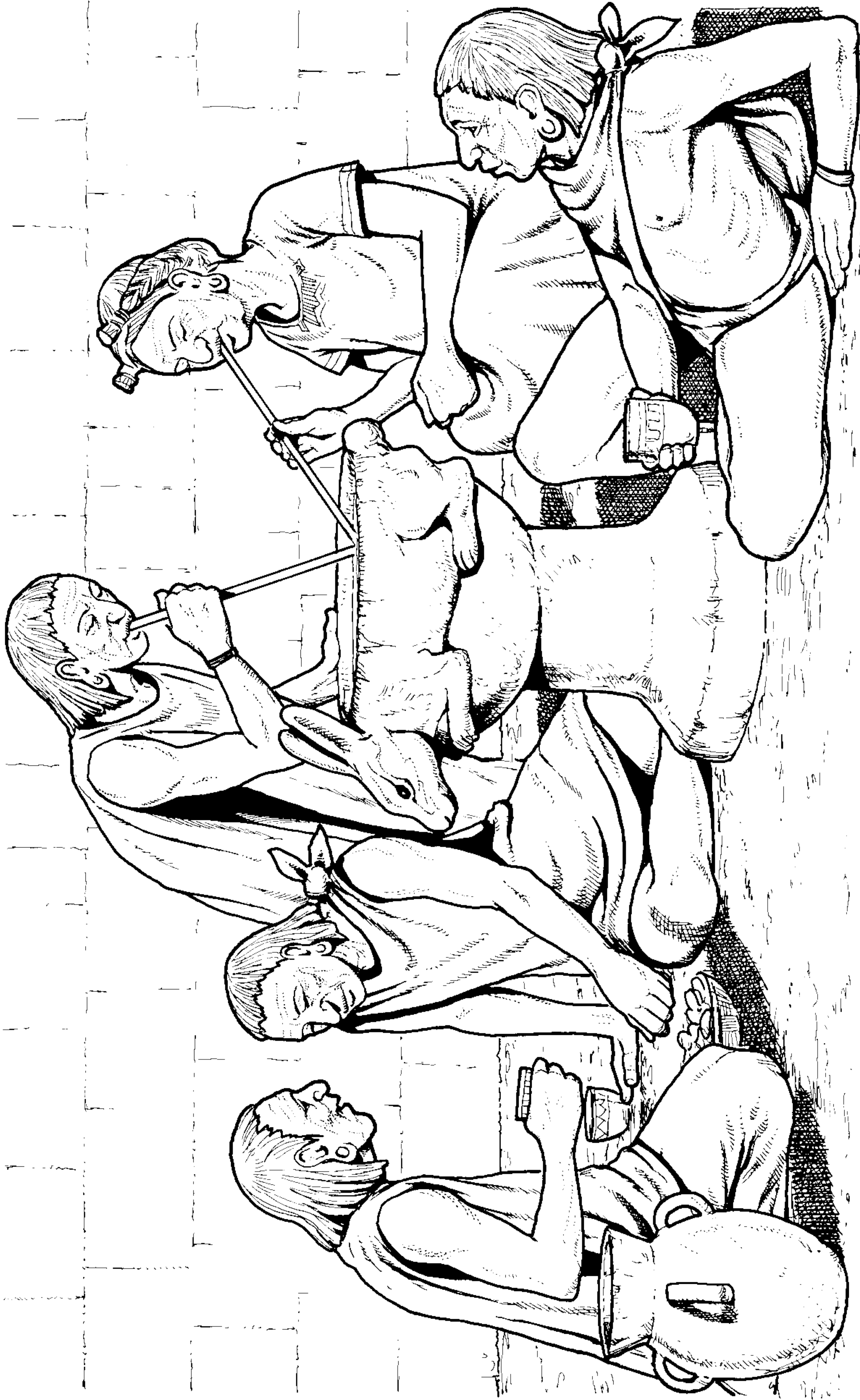
Aztec fathers bringing their boys to school. Just as all aspects of Aztec life were tightly controlled, so education was meant to create loyal citizens and competent civil servants. Child raising was fairly strict, and household duties were learned very early. There were two types of free schooling for boys. Most boys went to school for part of the day, learning religion, civic duties and military matters and doing strenuous chores to become hardened. When at home they would learn their father's trade. A very few schools for the well-to-do,

attached to temples, imparted law, sciences and other higher subjects to boys slated for the priesthood or for the varied duties of the nobility (see page 27). In a severe monastery-like atmosphere, they underwent fasts, penances and other character-building hardships. Most girls remained at home until marriage, but some from better families attended a sort of convent school in which they learned home economics and traditional women's work.



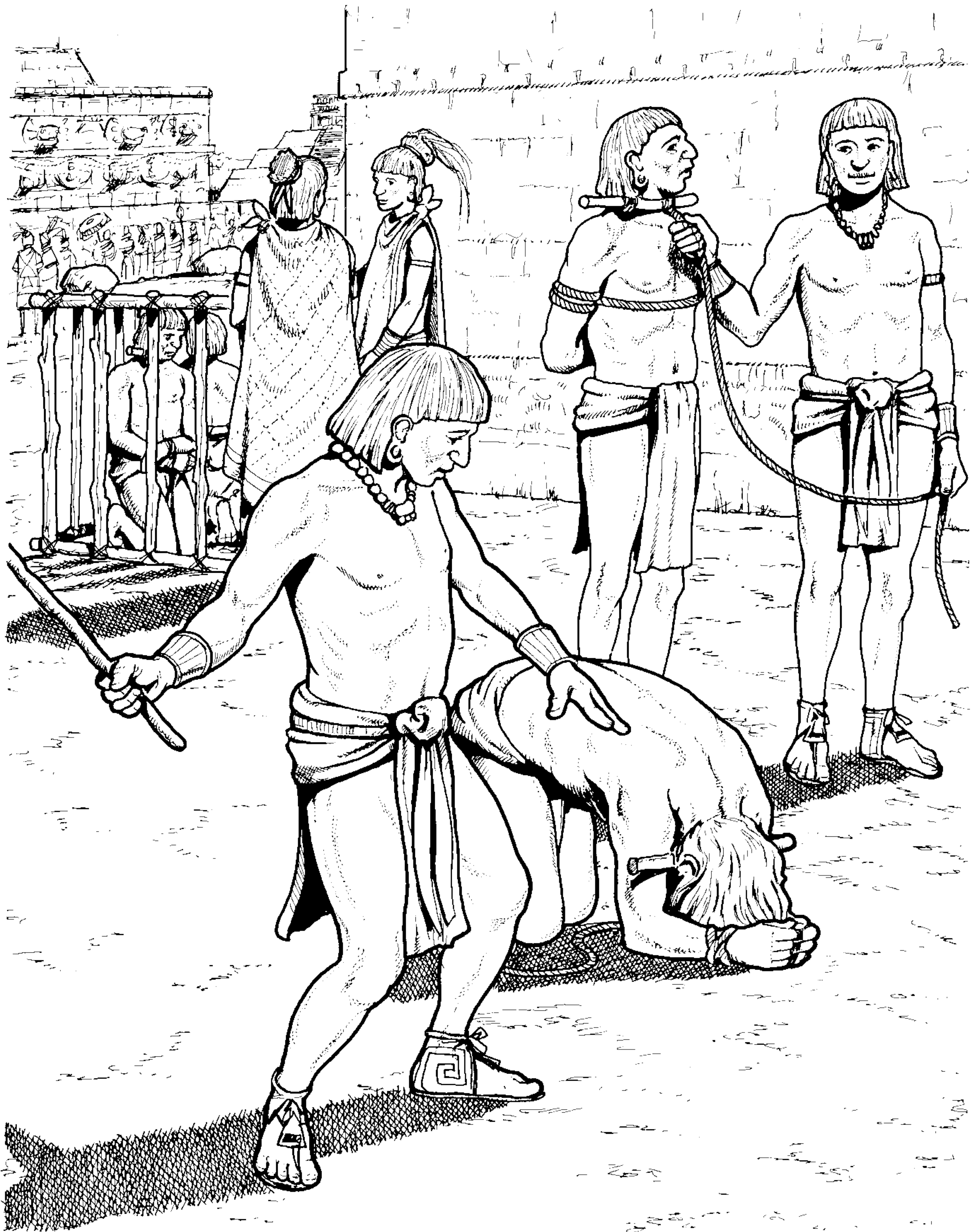
Aztec wedding. Marriages were generally arranged by the two families. The preliminaries involved astrologers to take horoscopes and matchmakers to conduct negotiations. The groom would leave his school to become a householder. After receiving visitors at her home, the bride would be carried to the groom's house at night in a festive procession. By the hearth, the robes of the bride and groom would be tied together. Two old men and two old women were the

formal witnesses. The feast would be accompanied by long speeches informing the couple of their new duties, including hard work for the man and obedience for the woman. Polygamy, too expensive for most men, was common among the nobility. Divorce was difficult, but possible via judicial proceedings. Unfaithfulness, when detected, was a capital offense.



Elderly Aztecs drinking. Drunkenness was frowned upon as a waste of manpower and a disturbance of society, but drinking was permitted to both men and women over 70. (At weddings and holidays, everyone over 30 could drink, within rigid limits.) The most popular alcoholic beverage was made from magueys (agave plants),

just as the present-day drinks pulque, tequila and mescal are. Intoxication and hallucinations could also be attained by the use of peyote (a cactus) and "sacred" mushrooms, both for pleasure and in religious and medical ceremonies (see page 36).



Aztec slaves and civil prisoners. The men with the neck bars are slaves. In Aztec society, slaves (about two percent of the population) might be prisoners of war; people convicted of certain types of crime; people supplied by conquered nations as part of their tribute; or people who became slaves voluntarily to pay off a debt or because they were unable to make a living. Slaves could acquire property and buy their freedom. The men

on public display in the cage are criminals awaiting trial or execution. Laws were harsh, with death or slavery prescribed for a wide variety of offenses, although the punishment for most crimes required only a payment in some form. In many instances, noblemen, who carried greater responsibilities along with their higher status, were punished more severely than commoners for the same kind of crime.



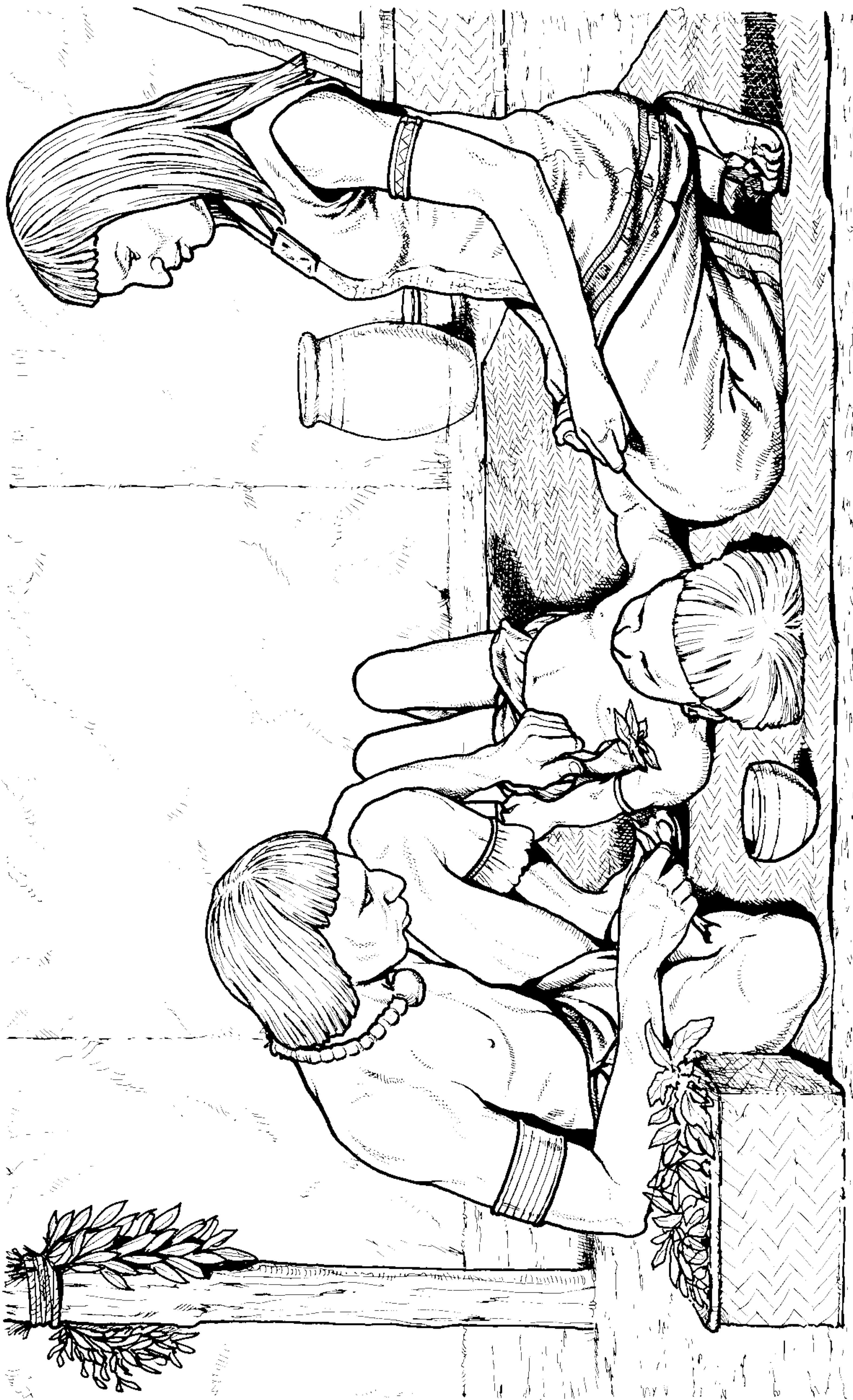
Aztec agriculture on a chinampa ("floating garden"). The Aztecs used *milpa* farming extensively (see page 4), but their most fertile land, which did not need to lie fallow, was that reclaimed from their lakes and swamps by means of *chinampas*. These man-made islands were created by loading rich lake-bottom mud onto matted vegetation strengthened with posts and wickerwork. Tourists still enjoy seeing a trace of this farming practice on the canals of the Xochimilco district of Mexico City.

Houses could be built on the larger *chinampas*. It was possible to raise several crops a year; vegetables, maize and flowers were grown. Aztec farmers prepared the soil with digging sticks (see page 4); they had no plows. Irrigation was widely used. A dam separated the salty water of part of Tenochtitlán's lake from the useful spring-fed water of the other parts. Bees were also raised for their honey.



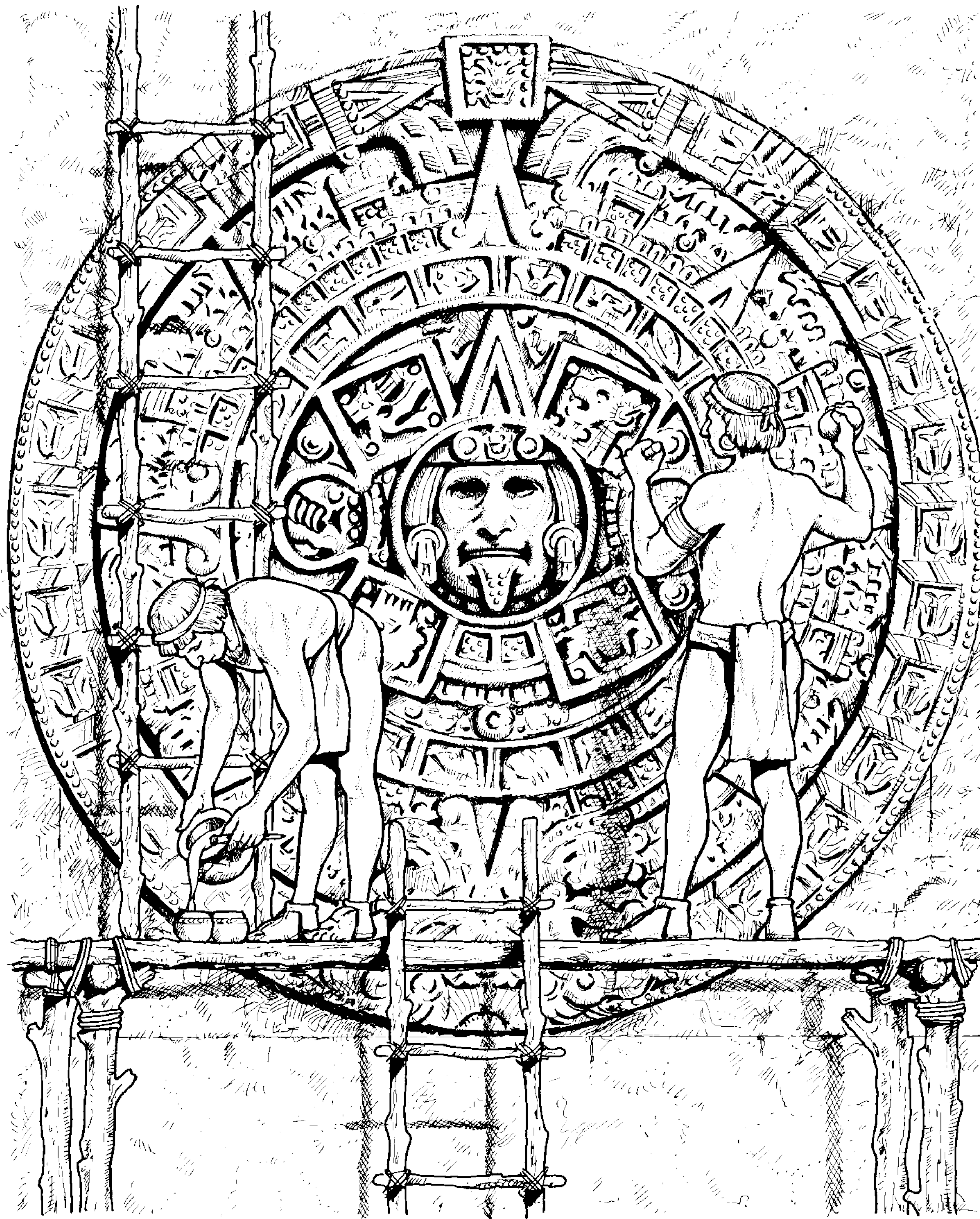
Aztec hunter and fisherman. Since very few animals were raised for food, hunting and fishing were important means of supplying protein in the diet. Game of many sorts was hunted. Deer hunters sometimes used camouflage to stalk their prey close up. Smaller animals, such as rabbits, were caught in nets and snares, while pitfall traps were dug for others. Birdlime was used to catch small birds. Fishermen were a common sight on

the lakes and canals; both saltwater and freshwater fish were available at Tenochtitlán, depending on the locality (see page 34). Weirs (underwater enclosures), large nets and small bag nets were used, but fishermen would also kill with bow and arrow or with a spear. In addition, the lakes provided a large number of waterfowl for the table.



Aztec doctor healing with herbs. As among all New World native peoples, including the Indians of the United States, medical practice was a compound of religious beliefs and firm knowledge. Evil gods and witches were blamed for certain diseases, and doctors depended on rituals, and sometimes on hallucinations, for their diagnosis and treatment. But, on the other hand, bodily and dental hygiene were considered important; some very valid means, such as steam baths,

were used in cures; and, above all, over a thousand different plants were used, both for medicine to be taken internally and for plasters to be applied. This type of folk herb medicine, whose effectiveness has frequently been confirmed by modern chemical analysis, is still current in rural parts of Mexico and in areas of the U.S. Southwest with a Mexican-American population.



Aztec sculptors working on the great Sun Stone. Stone sculpture—bold, powerful, sometimes almost frightening—was probably the greatest art among the Aztecs. In addition to figures in the round representing gods, people and animals, there are many gigantic blocks with relief carving. Perhaps the most famous is the Sun Stone (often called the Calendar Stone), the thrilling discovery of which in Mexico City in 1790 led to the modern study of Mexican archaeology. Weighing 24 tons, with a

diameter of 12 feet, it has as its center the image of the sun god, athirst for human sacrifices. He is surrounded by images of the four past eras of mankind mentioned in Aztec sacred history. Further rings contain symbols of the days in the 260-day count (see page 14) and two fire-serpents. This magnificent monument is now in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City along with many other of the finest surviving works of art from ancient Mexico.



Aztec metalworker. Aztec craftsmen belonged to organizations similar to the medieval European craft guilds that both protected and regulated their members' activities. Goldsmiths occupied their own quarter in Tenochtitlán. Ornaments and some objects for use were made from gold, copper, silver and tin (all of which had to be imported from a distance) and various

alloys of those metals. Very little Aztec gold work has survived. The man in the illustration is using a blowpipe to increase the temperature in the charcoal-fueled brazier in which metal for axe heads is being melted. The liquid metal is pouring out of the spout into a stone mold that will shape it into the form of the (still unfinished) axe heads lying in front of the pot.



Aztec feather worker. A truly distinctive craft was feather working, in which the craftsman's entire family might take part. (Here again, there was a guild and a special quarter of the city.) Bright feathers from tropical birds would be brought by merchants or sent as tribute from rain-forest areas of Mexico and Central America to be made into clothing and numerous other objects, some—of the highest quality—for the court, some for

general consumption. For such flexible items as cloaks and headdresses, the feathers were knotted or sewn. For more rigid articles, such as luxury shields, pieces of feathers were glued onto frameworks in mosaic patterns. The shield on the wall in the picture is based on one, now in Vienna, that was probably given to Cortés by Motecuhzoma II.



Aztec market. Tenochtitlán was the center of a far-flung empire, and goods poured into the city as tribute from subject regions and as imported merchandise. The largest market in Mexico was that of Tlatelolco, a part of the capital that had once

been a separate adjacent city. The first Spanish visitors were amazed at the extent and efficiency of the operation. Sixty thousand people might be assembled daily. Vendors were grouped in sections according to their wares. Inspectors patrolled. Appre-



hended thieves were summarily punished. The barter system was generally used, but certain commodities, such as cacao beans and quills filled with gold dust, were recognized as currency. Items were sold by measure or number, not by weight.

A large, detailed model of the Tlatelolco market is one of the chief attractions at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.



Aztec merchant with a caravan of porters. Merchants were a prestige group just below the nobility, but could not flaunt their wealth. They had close business ties with the craftsmen whom they supplied with imported materials. Long-distance merchants, called *pochteca*, who had their own courts and judges in Tenochtitlán, went off on high-risk, high-profit trading expeditions that might last over a year. Canoes were used on water-

ways; porters were necessary overland because of the lack of draft animals (see page 4). The caravans, which often had to defend themselves, were armed. In foreign regions the *pochteca* often acted as spies, and sometimes deliberately stirred up trouble that could lead to an invasion by the Aztecs. Among the social grades of merchants, the highest were those who could afford an elaborate feast at which slaves were sacrificed.



Aztec musicians and entertainers at a feast. Music was greatly enjoyed and was taught at special "song houses." It was closely linked to the Aztecs' well-developed poetry (many texts have been preserved), which was usually chanted to instrumental accompaniment. Music was also used in battle. The Aztecs had numerous percussion instruments, such as rattles and vertical and horizontal drums (often beautifully carved), and various

types of wind instruments, including whistles, panpipes, flutes, ocarinas and conch-shell trumpets. The stringed instruments so popular in Mexico today (guitars, harps, fiddles) were introduced from Europe after the Conquest. Nevertheless, a great deal of native American culture survives in folk music and folk dancing (especially at festivals) all over the nation of Mexico.



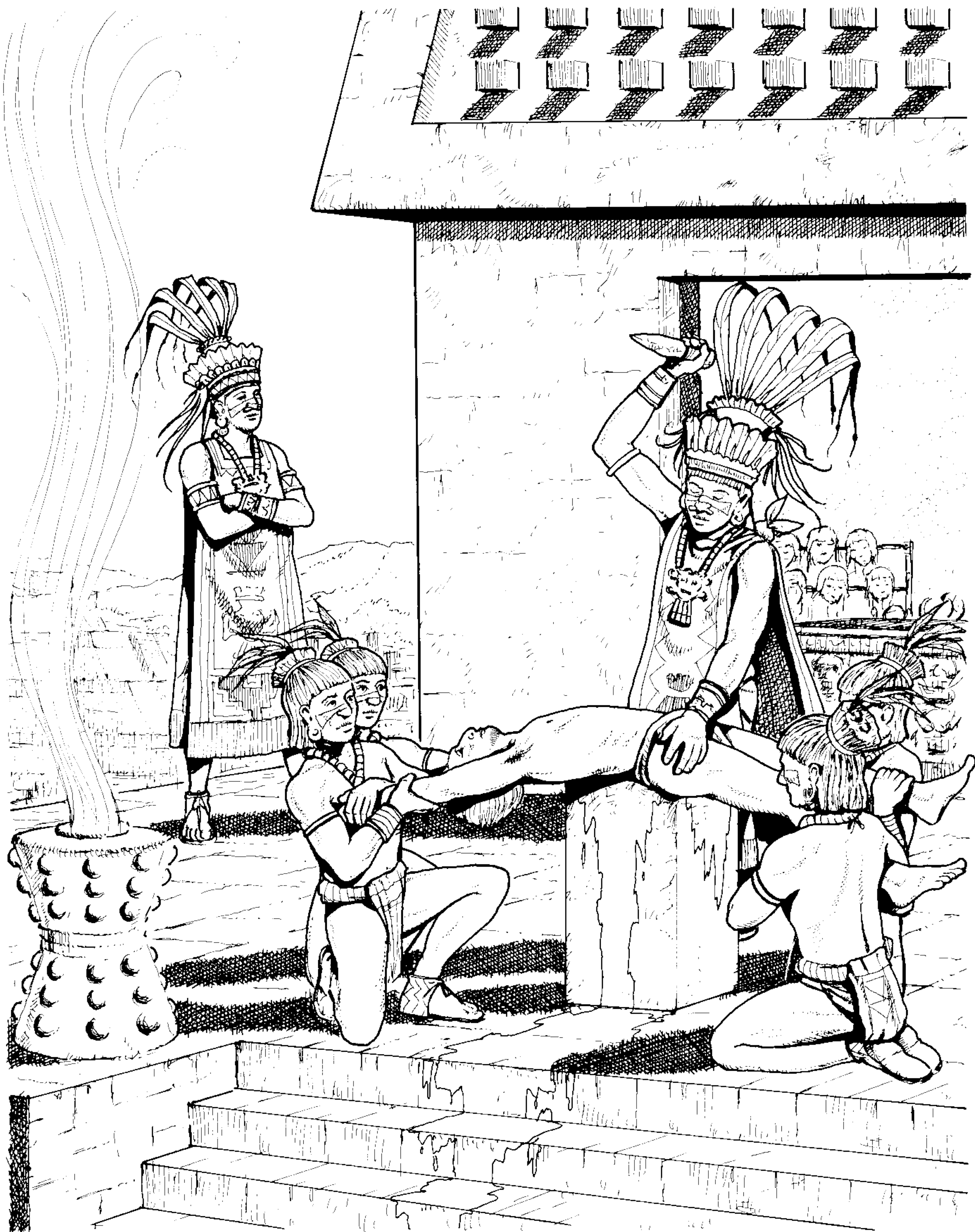
Aztec warriors in battle. War was of paramount importance in Aztec life. The empire (as large in area as Italy) had been won in battle and was maintained by military vigilance. Success in battle, especially the taking of prisoners, was essential for social advancement (see page 27). When actual warfare hit a slack season, the Aztecs would fight a prearranged tournament-like

“flowery war” with certain neighbors to keep on their mettle and to obtain prisoners for sacrifice. There was only a small nucleus of professional soldiers, since all men were trained for service as part of their normal schooling (see page 30). Weapons included the sword-club edged with blades of obsidian (black volcanic glass), thrusting spears, bows, slings and javelins pro-



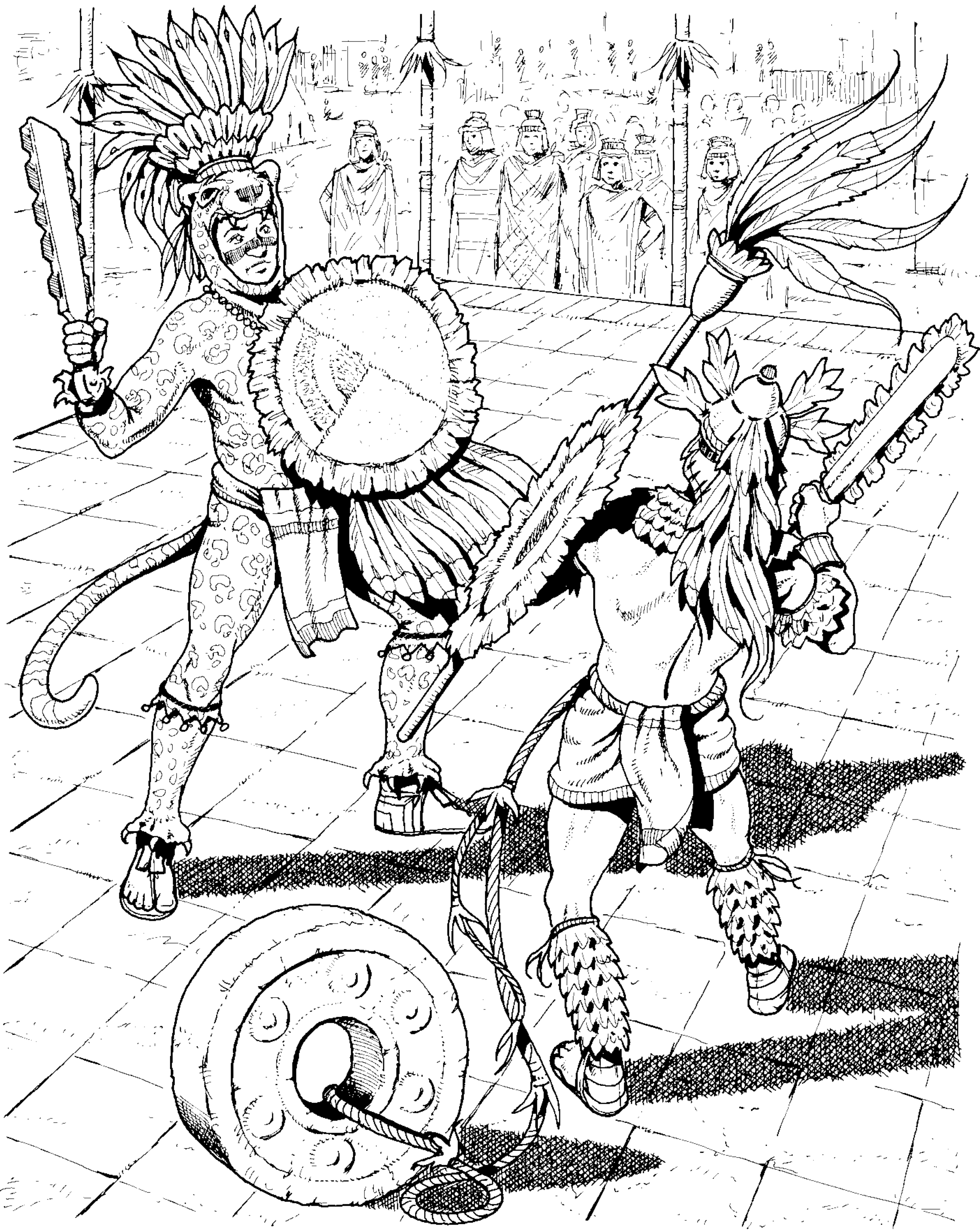
pelled by dart-throwers. Troops normally wore body armor of quilted cotton, but the elite corps of jaguar knights and eagle knights wore the special uniforms seen in the illustration. Fighting might be in pitched battles, starting with showers of missiles and an attack by seasoned troopers, or by means of ambush. Because profitable tribute was a chief goal of conquest, the

persons and property of the enemy were kept as intact as possible. The destruction of the enemy's chief temple, whose god had opposed the Aztec gods, was a sufficient token of victory.



Aztec human sacrifice. Sacrifice to the gods, especially the god of war and the sun, was as indispensable to the Aztecs as it was to other Mexican groups (see page 9). The religious calendar was studded with festivals that required various types of sacrifices, such as the annual killing of a handsome captive who for a year had been treated like a god on earth. But there were also special sacrifices in stressful times (such as the mass sacrifice of

children to the rain god during a drought) or on state occasions (20,000 victims at the dedication of the Templo Mayor in 1487; see pages 24/25). In the most celebrated type of sacrifice, taking place on shrine platforms atop temple pyramids, the victim's chest was opened with a flint knife, then his heart was pulled out and burned in a sacrificial vessel. The head was reserved for a skull rack, the body being rolled down the temple steps.



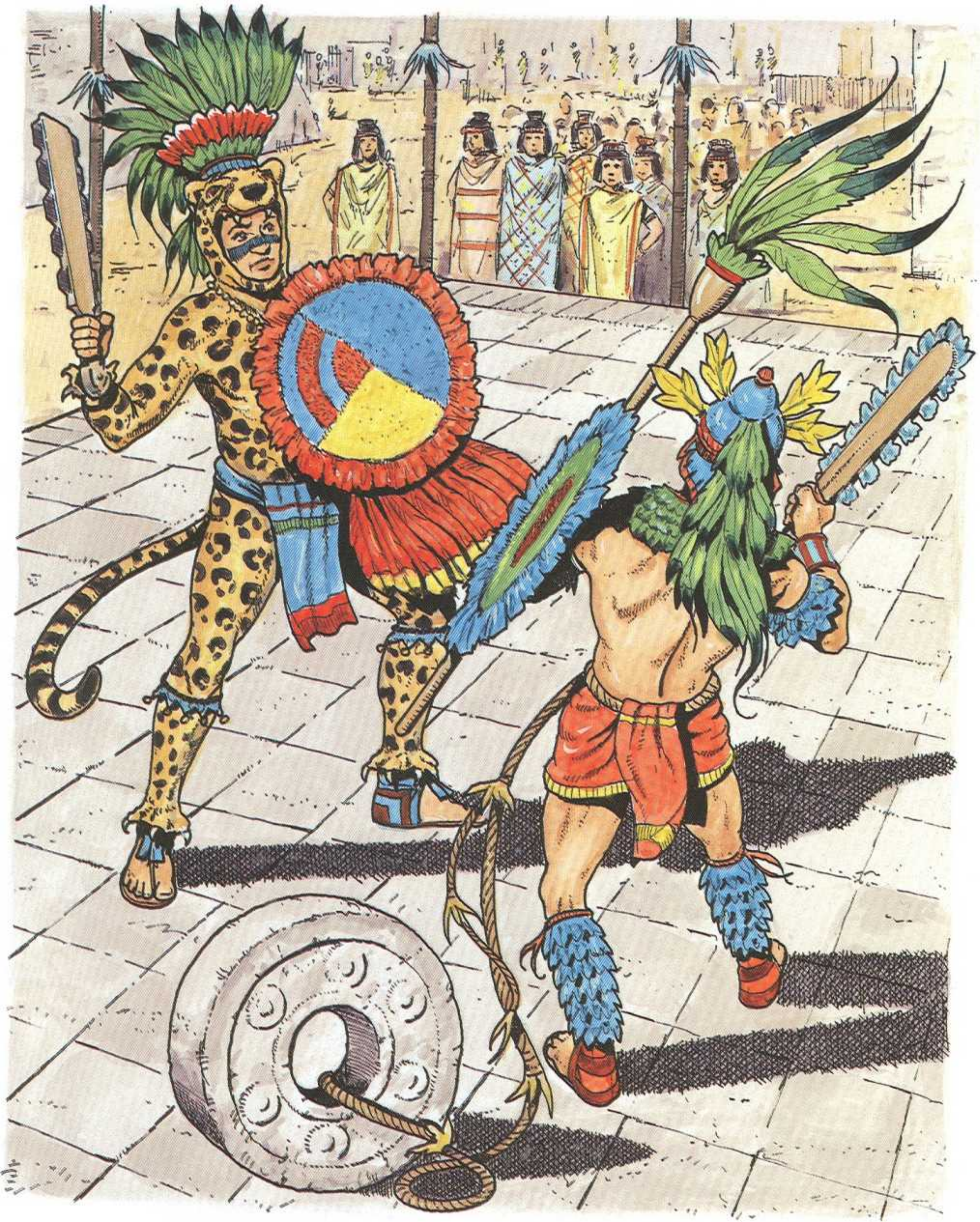
Aztec "gladiatorial sacrifice." The most unusual sacrifice, considered a particular honor, was reserved for a captive foeman whose valor had inspired respect. In the central ceremonial precinct (see pages 24/25), the prisoner was tied by the waist to a large stone wheel and was given wooden weapons with "edges"

of feathers and down. There he would contend against four normally armed men in succession. If he was still alive after that (which must have been a quite exceptional occurrence), his fifth adversary had to be a left-handed man. If the victim survived the fifth onslaught, he was set free.



Cortés meets Motecuhzoma II (Montezuma). The Spanish, in the Caribbean since 1492, first touched Mexican soil in 1518. Hernán Cortés set out from Cuba the following year and advanced from the Veracruz coast inland and upland to Tenochtitlán, gaining the native enemies of the Aztecs as allies. The indecisive Motecuhzoma (see page 26) admitted the Spanish to the city. In the illustration he is seen meeting Cortés and the latter's Indian interpreter and aide, Doña Marina or Malinche.

The emperor, held prisoner by Cortés, died during the uprising in the capital against the Spanish. The heroic last Aztec emperor, Cuauhtémoc, surrendered in 1521 and was executed in 1524. The Spanish were masters of Mexico, although many Indians held out much longer, the Maya being especially resistant. Unlike the U.S. Indians, those in Mexico never became a decimated marginal element; their physical and cultural presence continues to mold the nation.





Life in ANCIENT MEXICO Coloring Book

John Green

This well-researched and meticulously rendered volume introduces children and coloring book enthusiasts of all ages to the fascinating pre-Columbian civilizations of ancient Mexico. Over 40 authentically detailed drawings (including four double-page spreads) reflect the customs, traditions and activities of daily life—from the earliest major civilization (Olmec) through the Maya, Zapotec, Mixtec and Aztec periods.

Here are dramatic scenes of Aztec human sacrifices and other mysterious religious rites; warriors in battle; panoramic views of the cities of Teotihuacán, Chichén Itzá, Monte Albán and Tenochtitlán; as well as realistic vignettes of a goldsmith, sculptors, metalworkers and other artisans at work; women weaving, spinning and preparing food; an Aztec wedding, astronomers taking sightings at Palenque, a meeting between Cortés and Motecuhzoma (Montezuma) and much more.

Stanley Appelbaum has written an informative introduction and detailed descriptive captions for the illustrations. The result is a stimulating and educational book that will be valued by parents and teachers as an excellent resource for history and geography lessons. Graphic artists and designers will find it a storehouse of inexpensive, copyright-free graphics as well.

Original Dover (1991) publication. Map and 41 black-and-white line illustrations (including 4 double-page spreads). Four color illustrations on covers. Introduction. Captions. 48pp. 8¼ × 11. Paperbound.